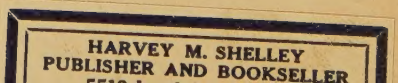
APR - 6 1961



EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE INTEREST OF THE BIBLE

THE INTEREST OF THE BIBLE

BY

JOHN EDGAR M'FADYEN, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND THEOLOGY
UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW
AUTHOR OF
INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT,' 'THE PROBLEM OF PAIN' (JOB)
A CRY FOR JUSTICE' (AMOS)
ETC.

LIBRARY OF
United Theological Seminary
BS
1140
.M28
51,499
EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

HODDER AND STOUGHTON LIMITED.
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

Printed in Great Britain
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOL

TO THE

REV. PRINCIPAL W. M. CLOW, D.D.

GENEROUS COLLEAGUE

AND

FAITHFUL FRIEND

SCHOOL OF

PREFACE

THE supreme interest of the Bible is, of course, the religious interest; but this interest is interwoven with many others, less important indeed, but hardly less fascinating: and every student of life or literature—whatever be his theological standpoint, and even if he has none or thinks he has none—will find in the Bible material and problems sufficient to engage his interest and tax his attention to the uttermost.

This volume—which deals chiefly with the Old Testament, where the material is richer and more varied than in the New—is an attempt to suggest something of its diversified and endless fascination. The interests with which it deals are literary, biographical, historical, theological, devotional, reflective, and practical. In the consideration of each of these we cannot but feel that we are in contact with a great historical movement, and with living, earnest, and original minds. Our superficial familiarity with the quaint language in which our common versions make those ancient men speak, too frequently conceals from us the historical realities among which they moved, and the energy and insight with which they faced those realities. But when, by a sympathetic criticism, those great personalities are recovered, they are found to have vital significance not only for their own day, but for ours. They, being dead, yet speak

words of immeasurable value for the guidance of our personal and public life.

The first chapter appeared originally in *The Contemporary Review*, the second in *The Homiletic Review*, the third in *The American Journal of Theology*, the fourth, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth, in *The Biblical World*, the fifth and fifteenth in *The Expositor*, the sixth and eighteenth in *The Expository Times*, the seventh in *The Holborn Review*, the thirteenth in *The Hibbert Journal*, the fourteenth and seventeenth in *The Westminster* (Toronto), and the sixteenth in *The Free Churchman*. To the editors of all these magazines I owe my very cordial thanks for their most courteous and readily granted permission to reproduce these chapters.

JOHN E. M'FADYEN

Glasgow,
4th September 1922

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

LITERARY

CHAP. PAGE

I. Do we need a Revision of the Old Testament? 1

II. The Interpretation of the Bible . . 16

III. Hellenism and Hebraism 29

BIOGRAPHICAL

IV. The Character of Saul 51

V. History and Homiletics: A Study in the Character of David (2 Sam. xxi. 1–14). 69

HISTORICAL

VI. The Spirit of Early Judaism . . . 92

THEOLOGICAL

VII. The Future Life in the Old Testament . 124

DEVOTIONAL

Communion with God in the Bible—

VIII. In the Old Testament Prophets. . . 140

IX. In the Historical Books of the Old Testament 155

X. In the Book of Psalms 170

XI. In Christ 184

XII. In the New Testament Church . . . 198

REFLECTIVE

CHAP.		PAGE
XIII.	Civilization Criticized at the Source: A Study of Genesis i.–xi.	212
XIV.	The Prophet as Pessimist	226
XV.	Isaiah and War	236
XVI.	A Plea for the Heretic	252

PRACTICAL

XVII.	The Social Principles of the Prophets	259
XVIII.	The Psalter and the Present Distress	270
	Index of Subject Matter	301
	Index of Chief Scripture References	304

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

I

DO WE NEED A REVISION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT? [1]

BEHIND this question lies, of course, another. Do we need the Old Testament at all? Its literary and historical importance is immense and indubitable; but if it has nothing to say to the modern world, another version is hardly worth while. No one, however, who knows that noble literature will believe that its day is over. The charm of its biography, the insight and range of its history, the moral penetration and spiritual passion of its prophecy, the power of its lyrics to express every mood of the soul, the superb challenge of the incomparable Book of Job, the overwhelming sense of God which pervades it from beginning to end—these things give it an indefeasible place, in some ways not second even to the New Testament, in the religious literature of the world. Such a book deserves to be brought as close to the modern heart as skill and knowledge can bring it. Has the Revised Version done this?

Undoubtedly that version marks a real advance upon the Authorised. Take, *e.g.*, the series of passages which used to form part of the stock-in-trade of the Messianic argument. "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me" (Deut. xviii. 15); "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xvi. 10). By the simple device of printing the significant words in capital letters the Authorised

[1] From *The Contemporary Review*.

Version imposed upon these and other passages a Messianic reference which they did not and could not have in the original text; the Revised Version, by substituting small letters for capitals, has opened the way to the true interpretation of these passages, by setting them in the light of their proper historical and literary context.

But in very many directions the Revised Version leaves much to be desired. For one thing, it carries over from the older version words and usages which have entirely passed away from the diction of modern men—words like "bolled," "polled," "chapmen" for traders, "bewray" for betray, "ancient" in the sense of elder, "prevent" in the sense of anticipate, "strange" in the sense of foreign (applied, *e.g.*, to gods); and phrases like "this *liketh* you" for "this is what you like," "any that *can skill* to hew timber," "all that *could skill* of instruments of music"; and the intolerable "which" for "who." The late Professor A. B. Davidson defended such archaisms on principle. "The modern vocabulary," he tells us, "and the modern order of words, and the modern cast of sentences must be avoided." But why? The phenomenal success of recent renderings of the New Testament into thoroughly modern English shows that this is not the final word. The appeal of the Old Testament might be abundantly enhanced and extended, and its dignity would not necessarily be impaired, by being worthily presented in the intelligible speech of our own time. What it would lose in quaintness it would gain in lucidity, directness, and power. It has, indeed, been maintained with some plausibility that our needs can only be adequately met by two types of translation—one for iturgical purposes, the other for private reading or study—and that the latter may indulge in illuminating colloquialisms which would be intolerable in the former.

But is there any reason why a frankly modern translation of an ancient book should not have a dignity and nobility of its own, or are we to suppose that translations executed centuries ago have a monopoly of these qualities ?

There are, however, much more cogent reasons for revision than the mere elimination of archaisms. Considerable advances have been made in Semitic philology since the Revised Version was published, and, in particular, much work of the most valuable kind has been done in many countries towards the reconstruction of the original text ; and a better appreciation of the influences to which that text was subjected in the course of its long history has inspired in scholars a freer attitude to the traditional text—freer, but not less reverent, for its ultimate aim is truth. But even apart from the advances in knowledge of the last thirty-eight years, the Revised Version would have been far more fruitful and arresting had it been conducted on more daring and drastic lines. In its regard alike for the traditional Hebrew text and the Authorised Version it carries caution to the point of timidity, and the rule that " no change should be finally made in the text of the Authorised Version except by the vote of two-thirds of the company present and voting " has produced the curious result that, where alternative translations offer, the truth is more frequently to be found in the margin than in the text.

The most conspicuous and pervasive illustration of this timidity—or conservatism, if you will—is its rendering of the word Jehovah (originally, no doubt, Jahweh), the proper name of the God of Israel. Following the Authorised Version, which, in its turn, follows an ancient Jewish usage that is the product of a superstitious reverence for the sacred Name, it renders this name by " The LORD," and thus by one stroke effectually

obliterates the national quality of Hebrew religion; for Jehovah is strictly and primarily the God of the Hebrews, as Chemosh is the god of the Moabites. It might, indeed, be argued that, as the Hebrew God came in time to be recognized as the God of all the earth, little harm is done by such a rendering, especially in a book like the Psalter, which speaks home to the universal heart. But, in any case, this is not a *translation*; it destroys the national flavour of the Old Testament, it dilutes the intimacy of appeals like "O Jehovah! our Lord" with its "O LORD! our Lord"; and it positively ruins the point of the great story of Elijah, whose triumph, in his conflict with the prophets of the Phœnician Baal, culminates in the meaningless "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God" (1 Kings xviii. 39). In the ancient world there were gods many and lords many; and the Baal prophets, had they won, could have celebrated the triumph of their own lord-god in precisely the same words. What the people really said, and what a modern translation should make them say, is "*Jehovah*, He is God; *Jehovah*, He is God." This is one of the points—and there are not a few—in which the American Revision is superior to our own.

There are other renderings that come perilously near to nonsense. For example, the doom of the Assyrian, as proclaimed by Isaiah (x. 22 f.) is to be "a consummation" (for A.V.'s "consumption") "and that determined, overflowing with righteousness." Surely that needs modernising—the meaning is, "a decisive decree of destruction, breaking in like a flood of judgment." Again, who would suppose that in Deutero-Isaiah's description of the conquering career of Cyrus—

> "He pursueth them and passeth on safely;
> Even by a way that he had not gone with his feet."
> (Isa. xli. 3.)

—the second line is meant to characterise the *swiftness* of his victorious pursuit—a pursuit so swift that his feet, like Camilla's, scarcely seemed to touch the ground? Renderings like these are due to a pedantically scrupulous attention to the words with too little regard for the meaning. But there are many cases where obscurities or irrelevancies have been allowed to stand because the translators were too timidly reluctant to incorporate in their text the often practically certain emendations suggested by the Greek Version, though of these emendations and their value the margin shows that they were fully aware. Consider, *e.g.*, the fate of the rich fool in Ps. xlix. 11, "their inward thought is (that) their houses (shall continue) for ever." This statement, which is highly improbable on lexical and contextual grounds, appears in the Greek Version as "their graves are their houses for ever" (the grave is their everlasting home), which, besides making admirable sense, involves no more change than the transposition of two Hebrew consonants. This rendering, which is unquestionably correct, is relegated to the margin. Sometimes no consonantal change is necessary at all, but only a change in the vowels, which, as is well known, formed no part of the original text. In a stern passage Jehovah is made to say in Hosea vi. 5: "Thy (*i.e.*, Israel's) judgments are (as) the light that goeth forth"; the true meaning is, as the Greek Version saw, "*My* judgment shall go forth like the light"—a meaning which involves no consonantal change at all. Doubtless this rendering, too, is in the margin; why should it not be in the text? Again, to most thoughtful people who listen to the words of the familiar anthem, "The lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the LORD shall want no manner of thing that is good" (Ps. xxxiv. 10, Prayer Book Version), and who remember the almost uniformly tender regard of the Old Testament, and not least of

the Psalter (cf. Ps. cxlvii. 9), for animals, the contrast between the hungry lions and the flourishing saints will seem improbable, if not ridiculous. Duhm's happy suggestion, which involves no change whatever in the consonantal text, yields admirable sense, "Unbelievers (or apostates) may lack and suffer hunger," &c. Now we have an intelligible and familiar contrast: cf. Ps. xxxvii. *passim*.

Conjectural emendations, unsupported by the witness of ancient versions, admittedly form a more precarious basis for translation; but some of these are so simply effected and so intrinsically probable that they may be adopted with little misgiving, especially when the meaning they yield is as reasonable as the traditional text and interpretation are inept. To revert to the forty-ninth Psalm, in verse 7 it is said that "none (of them) can by any means redeem his brother." But the whole point of the psalm is that in the great moment of death the rich man cannot redeem *himself*: the wealth he has hoarded can do nothing for him then. Now the Hebrew word for "brother" (*ach*) is very similar in sound to the asseverative particle "surely" (*akh*), and in the process of dictation these words could easily be confused by a scribe to whom the passage was being dictated. There is practically no doubt that the line should run, "Surely no man can by any means redeem himself." Similarly in Isaiah xi. 4, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," everyone can see that "the earth" is no sort of parallel to "the wicked" —we should almost unquestionably read "the violent," from which it differs in Hebrew by only one consonant, and that of similar type. Every scholar knows of scores of such emendations which, simple in themselves and often supported by some ancient version, are so highly probable as to deserve incorporation in a translation

whose aim is to reproduce the good sense of the original writer, and not the vagaries of a faulty text. It sometimes even happens that verses have passed into the current of common speech, which textual criticism or the context or both show to misrepresent entirely the sense of the original. Who, *e.g.*, that is familiar with the Psalter has not in times of violence comforted his own or other hearts with the words, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, the residue of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Ps. lxxvi. 10)? The Revised Version acknowledges the difficulty of the text by more literally rendering the last verb by the meaningless "Thou shalt gird upon Thee." But the sense of the words, supported in part by an easy and probable emendation and in part by the Greek Version, is probably, "All nations of men shall praise Thee; to Thee shall the remnant hold festival." Perhaps the most famous illustration of the failure to do justice to the obvious demands of the context is to be found in the verse rendered in A.V. by the immortal words, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). The Revised Version tinkers with the passage by altering "trust in Him" to "wait for Him"; but to the margin, as usual, it relegates the true meaning, which the context shows indubitably to be, "Behold, He shall slay me; I will not wait," or, better still, "I have no hope."

Often the translation is vitiated by a too servile adherence to Hebrew idiom, an adherence which is sometimes carried to the point of obscuring the meaning. Can we describe as other than pedantic literalism a practically unintelligible verse like this: "Yea, they have not been planted; yea, they have not been sown; yea, their stock hath not taken root in the earth; moreover He bloweth upon them, and they wither," &c., when the plain meaning, again relegated to the margin, simply is, "Scarcely have they been planted,

sown, &c., when He bloweth upon them" (Isa. xl. 24). The everlasting "and it came to pass," which is too cumbrous for the simple Hebrew which it represents, would almost, if not altogether, disappear from a thoroughly modern translation; and the *oratio recta*, which is natural in Hebrew, would frequently give place in our idiom to the *oratio obliqua*. Consequently such a verse as "And it shall come to pass, when they say unto thee, 'Whither shall we go forth'" (Jer. xv. 2) would become something like, "When they ask you where they shall go to." Sometimes it would almost seem as if the translators went out of their way in search of an unidiomatic rendering, as in Jer. xiii. 14, "I will not have compassion *that I should not destroy them*," where "no compassion will restrain Me *from destroying them*" is not only more idiomatic, but more literal. Further, the use of a word like "bowels" in Jer. iv. 19, for which the American Revisers wisely substitute "anguish," reduces to a level almost grotesque a passage charged with intense and solemn pathos. On the other hand, by a curious perversity, the beauty and originality of some phrases which could have been happily rendered quite literally are obscured by a quite unnecessary paraphrase—"Oh the pain, the pain in my bosom! *the walls of my heart* are athrob"—appear as "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained *at my very heart*" (Jer. iv. 19). Sailors in a storm are described as "at their wit's end" (Ps. cvii. 27); the psalmist says, far more strikingly, "their wisdom is all swallowed up." And "the dark mountains" is the tame equivalent for Jeremiah's fine phrase, "the mountains of twilight" (Jer. xiii. 16). It is nothing to the point that these daring phrases are to be found in the margin; it is sheer injustice to the poet and the prophet not to put them in the text.

There is a tendency to translate certain great recurring

words in inelastic and conventional ways which deprive a passage of its life and colour. Substitute "justice" for "judgment," *e.g.*, as the American Revision so frequently does, and note the transformation in such passages as these: "Let justice roll down as waters" (Amos v. 24), or "Where is the God of justice?" (Mal. ii. 17). Again, it is only when we remember that the word conventionally rendered "peace" has the far wider sense of "welfare" that we truly understand Jeremiah's denunciations of the religious leaders who healed the hurt of the people but slightly, saying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (vi. 14, viii. 11). How much more forcible would be the rendering, "They say, 'It is well, it is well'; when it is anything but well." And the not very intelligible "The chastisement of our peace was upon him" (Isa. liii. 5) just means, "For our welfare he was chastised." Again, readers who know nothing of the ecstatic nature of early prophecy must be sorely puzzled by such a statement as that in 1 Sam. xix. 24, "Saul stripped off his clothes, and he also *prophesied* before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night." What is meant is that he behaved like an ecstatic; to the average reader who inevitably associates prophecy with the canonical prophets where he does not identify it with prediction, the phrase "he prophesied" must convey a totally false impression.

A literal translation of an idiom may also be quite misleading. "Son of X," *e.g.*, means in Semitic usage "belonging to the category of X," so that when Amos says he is neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet (vii. 14) he means, not that his father was not a prophet, but that he himself does not belong to a prophetic guild—he is not a professional. Inattention to this idiom may carry serious consequences for interpretation, notably in phrases to which great theological significance has been attached. "Son of man," *e.g.*, means "belong-

ing to the category of humanity," and is practically equal to *man*: "Sons of God" or "of the gods" (Ps. xxix. 1; Job i. 6) are beings who belong to the order of God or the gods, *supernatural beings*. Failure on the part of A.V. to do justice to this idiom, combined with its well-meant but wholly unwarranted use of the capital letter, has made the false interpretation of two important passages in Daniel inevitable to the uninstructed reader. The one is in iii. 25, "the form of the fourth" in the burning fiery furnace "is like the Son of God"; the other is the more famous passage in vii. 13, "Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven." These passages, which have nothing in the world to do with the pre-existence of Jesus, are undoubtedly improved in the Revised Version, which does not, however, in either case, go the whole length of giving a thoroughly modern equivalent for the Semitic idiom. For the former it gives "a son of the gods"—the real meaning is a supernatural figure; and for the latter it gives "a son of man." But if we render "There came with the clouds of heaven *a figure in human form*," we immediately grasp the contrast, very deliberate and significant, between the humane kingdom of the new era typified by this human figure, and the four kingdoms of brute force that had preceded it, typified by the four powerful beasts.

These modernizations at once raise the difficult question of the distinction between translation and paraphrase. In one sense all translation is impossible. Lord Frederic Hamilton, in *The Days Before Yesterday*, has told us of the difficulty missionaries experience in translating the Bible into Eskimo. To make it intelligible they had to say, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring Polar *bear*, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The "Lamb of God" had to be transformed into the "little Seal of God" and "a land flowing with

milk and honey" into "a land flowing with whale's blubber." Doubtless these are extreme cases, but it still remains true that, as far as the East is from the West, so far are the idioms of Eastern languages removed from Western, and especially the ground covered by abstract words like "righteousness" or "holiness" is never coterminous with the ground covered by their conventional equivalents in another language. But that is not to say that the translator has any right to be uniformly paraphrastic. Take, *e.g.*, the very modern passage in which Amos (viii. 5) denounces the great grain-merchant profiteers of his time. They say, "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit?" This has been thus rendered by a recent translator: "You sigh all day Sunday, 'What a long time to wait till Monday morning! I wish it would come quickly, so that we might get back to our selling of corn and giving short measure, and running up prices and tilting the scales'!" This is modern enough, but it could not by any stretch of charity be called a translation; it is an unadulterated paraphrase. The new moon, *e.g.*, has simply disappeared; and if its extrusion be defended on the ground that this phrase means nothing to the modern reader who has no acquaintance with Hebrew institutions, and that the impression Amos produced upon the mind of his readers or hearers by his allusion to new moon and Sabbath is sufficiently reproduced upon the modern mind by an allusion to Sunday, the reply must still be that this is not translation but paraphrase. It might indeed be plausibly contended that to the average reader a paraphrase, especially of the prophets, brings home the meaning more vividly than any translation, however skilful, ever can; and perhaps the truth is

that the prophetic books, like the Epistles, will never be fully or even approximately intelligible except to those who are prepared to take the requisite trouble to understand them. But that does not justify us in obliterating the line, very delicate but very real, between translation and paraphrase.

The Revised Version has done much, but not nearly enough, to rescue and restore the poetical form in which so much of the Old Testament is written. Very large tracts of prophecy are poetical in form, and even the American Revision has done no sort of justice to this, though one is glad to note that the recent Jewish revision by American scholars has remedied this defect. But this is only the beginning of justice to the literary form of the original. It is not enough to appeal to the eye by printing the poetry in lines, the true appeal is to the ear. A translator who is trying to be as just as possible to all the constituents of his original, and who aims at giving his readers at least a taste of its manifold excellence, is surely under obligation to reproduce something of that rhythm which we now know to lie not only, as we have so often been taught, in the answering thoughts of the Hebrew lines, but also in the words themselves. Occasionally this rhythm is artlessly reproduced, with the most striking effects, even in our familiar English translations ; as in :

> " The ox knoweth his owner,
> And the ass his master's crib ;
> But Israel doth not know,
> My people doth not consider."
> (Isa. i. 3.)

> " For lo ! the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone,
> The flowers appear on the earth," &c.
> (Song ii. 11 f.)

But with a little skilful effort—and no one should make

the attempt who has not the feeling for English as well as for Hebrew—the music of the ancient rhythm might be reproduced over the whole range of acknowledged Hebrew poetry. Scholars have already pointed the way. How charming, *e.g.*, is the late Professor Cheyne's rendering of the *Song of the Vineyard* :—

" A song will I sing of my friend,
A love-song touching his vineyard.
A vineyard belongs to my friend,
On a hill that is fruitful and sunny ;
He digged it and cleared it of stones,
And planted there vines that are choice ;
A tower he built in the midst,
And hewed also therein a wine-vat ;
And he looked to find grapes that are good,
Alas ! it bore grapes that are wild."

(Isa. v. 1 f.)

The Old Testament would be far more widely known as literature, and thus even its religious message might have a far better chance of a hearing, if it came to us more often in so winsome a dress. Or take Isaiah's glorious description of the onset of the Assyrian Army :—

" See ! hastily, swiftly they come—
None weary, none stumbling among them,
Unsleeping and slumbering never ;
The band of their loins never loosed,
The thong of their shoes never torn.

" Their arrows are sharp,
And their bows are all bent :
The hoofs of their horses are counted as flint,
And their wheels as the whirlwind."

(Isa. v. 26 ff.)

Two questions remain. The modern translator makes ample use of the results of textual criticism, in order that he may reach the most accurate and intelligible text possible ; is he not also entitled to avail himself

of literary criticism, in so far as it has clear pronouncements to offer on the structure of the books? Probably few would dispute this in the case of the prophets. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain by frankly recognizing the three great divisions of the Book of Isaiah (chaps. i.–xxxix., xl.–lv., lvi.–lxvi.), and even the sub-divisions within the first section; the prefixing to each of appropriate titles, and, where possible, of dates, and the rearranging of the order where, as in Jeremiah, it has been dislocated, will all contribute to the completer understanding of the book as a whole and in its several parts. But the case for utilizing the results of criticism is even more cogent in the historical books, at any rate in the Pentateuch. Everyone who has read this section of the Old Testament with even the most superficial attention must have noted its widely different contents—long stretches of entrancing narrative alternating with long stretches of (to us) dreary legislation; and everyone who knows anything of the literary analysis of the Pentateuch knows that the former sections are the work of prophetic historians and the latter of priestly. Why not frankly separate the two? Only then does either become fully intelligible. When the long legislative or ceremonial section beginning with Exodus xxxv. and ending with Numbers x. 28 is withdrawn from the narratives which surround it we are left with a connected and intensely human story of the fortunes of Israel in the wilderness as she wandered from Egypt to Canaan. The separation of at least these two great chains of narrative would be an enormous gain to the intelligent appreciation of the Pentateuch.

And this leads, in conclusion, to the question: Would a modern version of the Old Testament be under any obligation to incorporate the legislative sections at all! There are considerable portions of the Old Testament

which have little more than an archæological interest, and to these the ordinary twentieth-century reader is little likely to turn—Leviticus, *e.g.*, the genealogies of the Chronicler, and the ritual chapters which conclude Ezekiel. It is just in these sections, too, that the difference between a seventeenth and a twentieth-century translation would be least. But once the principle of selection is introduced, endless scope is offered for individual caprice. Many psalms might be plausibly eliminated, and there are few prophetic books that might not conceivably be curtailed. But even books like Leviticus and Ezekiel can be brought a little closer to the modern mind by expressing Hebrew weights, measures, and money in terms of their modern equivalent. In any case, it is perilous to base the choice of the passages to be translated upon the precarious criterion of modern taste, which will vary with each man's literary, religious, or ecclesiastical affinities; and even though we were to be assured in advance that large tracts of the most skilful modern translation we are ever likely to have would meet with the same neglect as that which the more familiar translations meet with now, it would still be worth while to have a thorough revision of the Old Testament in its completeness, "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

II

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE[1]

It cannot be said that the question of the interpretation of the Bible is an idle or an unimportant one. In the past, conduct the most immoral and deeds the most cruel have been justified by an appeal to its pages; and in the present, there are millions who do regard it, in some real sense, as a rule of faith and practice. Manifestly a mechanical and unhistorical interpretation may lead in the future, as it has done in the past, to results which are not only wooden but disastrous. Polygamy has appealed to the example of the patriarchs and other heroes of Israel, and many a poor wretch has lost her life because the ancient Scriptures said: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The bloodiest vengeance upon the field of battle has been supposed to be justified by the imprecatory psalms; and although there could hardly be many Christian people to-day who could contemplate with satisfaction, far less with joy, the dashing of the little children of their enemies against the rocks (Ps. cxxxvii. 9), or who would count it a glorious day when they might be privileged to bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked (Ps. lviii. 10), that spirit of reverence—for good and for evil—remains, which prompts multitudes to seek in the Bible not only for the ideals and the inspiration of their life, but for definite guidance in particular situations, and leads them to appeal to it for the concrete solution of the social problems of our time. One group will quote

[1] From *The Homiletic Review*.

sadly, "The poor ye have always with you," interpreting this to imply not only the existence, but the continuance of poverty as part of the divine order of things, established, so to speak, by a divine decree, which it would be not only hopeless, but almost impious, to attempt to alter. Others regard Jesus as a great social reformer, who saw very clearly not only the peril, but the wrong of wealth; or even as an agitator, who opened the doors of the kingdom upon the poor, and shut them in the faces of the rich. It is easy to see that the Bible, with its splendid breadth and variety of human experience, may be made to justify almost any view, and that an unscientific appeal to its isolated words may be productive of untold mischief.

But let us pass for the moment from practical questions to a more distinctly religious one. Most Christian people would admit that the Old Testament points to Christ. Indeed, we have the warrant of our Lord himself for believing that. He not only quoted the Old Testament Scriptures; He came, as He tells us, to fulfil them (Matt. v. 17), and He did fulfil them—they are fulfilled "in Him." But in what sense do they point to Him? Here the summaries of the chapters in the Authorized Version are very explicit in their testimony. The summaries of the Song of Songs, for example, which would unquestionably be held (were there no indication to the contrary) to be dealing with human love, blandly inform us that the real theme of the Song is the love of Christ and His Church. Chapters ii.–iv. may be taken as typical, and this is how they are entitled: "The mutual love of Christ and His Church. The hope and calling of the Church. Christ's care of the Church. The profession of the Church, her faith and hope. The Church's fight and victory in temptation. The Church glorieth in Christ. Christ setteth forth the graces of the Church. He showeth

His love to her. The Church prayeth to be made fit for His presence." Similarly throughout the psalms and the prophets, direct references to Christ are supposed to abound and are duly indicated in the headings of the chapters.

Now the first thing to be noted is that these are not descriptions of the contents of the chapters in question, but interpretations; and the second is, that just because they are interpretations, they are open to challenge. They may indeed be correct, but who is to guarantee them for us? If the meaning of a passage is not obvious, who is to decide what it does mean? Still more, if it is obvious, who is to say that that interpretation is to be displaced in favour of another? Ever since Wetzstein's famous essay on *The Syrian Threshing-board*, in 1873, it has been increasingly felt that the Song of Songs is really a collection of wedding songs; and certainly the impression made by the sometimes frankly sensuous language of the poem is that its theme is the love of man and maid for one another. But if we are told that the real theme is the love of Christ and His Church, then we have a right to ask, Who said so? Is this explanation necessary? Is it true?

The importance of the question of interpretation must be conceded, since the Bible is so universally regarded as the norm of faith and practice. But the moment we pass from its general spirit to detail, we find that in the Bible itself there is often a perplexing variety of opinion. Take, for example, its attitude to animals. Nothing could be more magnanimous than the Old Testament legislation that the ox was not to be muzzled when he was treading out the grain (Deut. xxv. 4). This is in accordance with the fine spirit of the prophets, and with the tender regard for the fate of the animals in Nineveh displayed by the writer of the marvellous Book of Jonah (iv. 11); and

this humane spirit receives its corroboration in Jesus, who saw in the sheep and the sparrow objects of the divine care. But it cannot be said without subterfuge that this view was altogether shared by Paul. When he asks, in his argument for the support of the Christian ministry, "Is it for the oxen that God careth?" it is clear that he means the answer to be No. It was not for the oxen's sake, but for ours; that beneficent ancient law, so perfectly plain on the face of it, really meant something other than it said. Again, differences of opinion are disclosed with regard to events and beliefs that cannot be considered of minor importance. The destruction of the dynasty of Ahab by Jehu, for example, which was approved by the enlightened conscience of Elisha's time (2 Kings x. 30) was condemned a century after by the maturer conscience of Hosea (i. 4). Again, the doctrine of the future life, which is asserted in Daniel, is questioned, if not denied, in Ecclesiastes. Again, the Old Testament is not uniform in its attitude to the foreigner. The unfriendly and exclusive legislation of Ezra, though it was no doubt thoroughly justified by the contemporary historical situation, is very different from the genial and friendly temper of the Book of Ruth, which frankly allows that a Moabitess may be an Israelite indeed, and of the Book of Jonah, which shows us the love of God stretching across the world to Assyria, and comprehending in its beneficent sweep the hated foreigner as well as the chosen people. In certain parts of the Old Testament, ethical standards vary, according as they are applied to a brother-Israelite or to a foreigner. Deut. xiv. 21 enacts, for example, that the flesh of an animal that has died a natural death, without being properly slaughtered, must on no account be eaten by an Israelite, but "thou mayest *give* it to the *stranger* that is within thy gates, or thou

mayest *sell* it to a *foreigner*." Later legislation, however, puts the stranger or proselyte practically on the same footing as the Israelite: "One law shall there be for the home-born and for the stranger" (Exod. xii. 49). A similar distinction is made by the law dealing with interest. It is right and proper to lend money on interest to a foreigner, but "thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother" (Deut. xxiii. 19). This is all very different from the generous occasional outlook upon a world of brothers, revealed by psalm and prophecy; as in the fine description of the triple alliance in the latter days when the two great enemies of Israel would be her friends, given in Isaiah xix. 23–25.

These illustrations—and they could be multiplied indefinitely—show how difficult, not to say impossible, it is to settle questions of conduct and faith or modern social problems by an appeal to isolated texts: the text is part of a mind, of an ancient social, political, religious atmosphere of which the one thing we can say with certainty is that it is not, and can not be, exactly identical with our own atmosphere; and all this has to be considered, and allowance made for it, before we are in a position to apply the text with discretion to our necessarily different situation. The question may, indeed, be fairly raised whether this is the proper use at all to which to put the Bible: whether—to put it bluntly—the Bible helps us by informing us or not rather by inspiring us; and it is coming to be generally felt that its worth and power are attested not so much by what it tells us to do as by what it moves us to do. Of course, it moves us most of all by its great vision of God, and especially of God in Jesus Christ; but these things in their turn come to us by way of impression rather than of definition.

(1) The first step to the adequate interpretation of the Bible is to remember that it was written primarily not for us. It is an ancient book addressed to ancient men, a Semitic book addressed to Semites. Doubtless it is infinitely more, but it begins by being that. This is an obvious point, but like most obvious points it is perpetually ignored. The vision of Isaiah, for example, admittedly concerns "Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isa. i. 1); manifestly, therefore, it does not primarily concern Britain or America in the twentieth century. That does not mean that Isaiah and the Hebrew prophets generally have nothing to say to us; they have still a mighty and a relevant word for the man or the nation that has ears to hear. Being dead, they yet speak, and we believe they will continue to speak for ever. But to discover what they mean, we must try, by every resource available, to find out what they meant. The ancient situation must be clearly understood before the thing of permanent value can be disentangled from its historical setting, and made valid and fruitful for the life of to-day. Even of the New Testament this is true. The particular controversy, for example, which was the occasion of the epistle to the Galatians, has for ages been a dead issue, and there is neither prospect nor possibility of its resuscitation. But the principle for which St Paul was contending, with his soul at white heat, is one of supreme and perpetual importance to religion. It is the emancipation of religion from the bondage of custom, tradition, and all the influences that destroy its spontaneity and divide its allegiance to Christ. "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; stand fast therefore and be not entangled again in any yoke of bondage" (v. 1). Thus, though the Bible was written primarily not

for us, in the providence of God it was written more or less truly for us and our edification.

But (2) to interpret it adequately, we must always consider its historical setting, and sometimes its literary form. This follows naturally from the contention of the last paragraph. To understand the primary message—and with that we must begin—we must know as completely as possible the situation in which it was born, the audience to which it was addressed, the speaker or writer who addressed it—his experience, his training, his aims, etc. Fortunately, there are many sections of the Bible, like the twenty-third psalm or 1 Cor. xiii., whose meaning is on the face of them, though even these gain in vividness, if not in power, when interpreted by the aid of some such historic study as we have been commending; but far more numerous are the sections which will not give up their secret until it is wrested from them in this way.

Most unprejudiced readers of the Bible frankly admit that all its books and sections are not of equal moral and religious value. Samson's dying prayer for thorough vengeance upon the Philistines and the sanguinary temper of the Book of Esther are separated by a whole moral world from the dying prayer of Jesus for forgiveness upon his enemies. But the historical method, by explaining these differences, delivers us from the perplexities in which those must be involved who—theoretically, at least—appeal to all parts of the Bible indiscriminately. The lower ideals may come from an early time—we have no right to expect the lofty morality of the New Testament to be anticipated twelve centuries before Christ; or they may be explained, as the fanaticism and vindictiveness are probably to be explained, by the atmosphere of provocation or persecution in which they originated. In either case they are instinctively

repudiated by the trained and sensitive Christian conscience.

This gradual progressiveness of the Biblical revelation finds its classical expression in the penetrating words which open the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son." The full bearing of these words is not always admitted by those who would accept the general statement. They imply that the words spoken before the advent of the Son are not really comparable to the words uttered by, and, so to speak, incarnate in, Jesus Christ. This frank admission, which the facts everywhere bear out, that the Old Testament is not a final word of God, shows the unwisdom of appealing to it as a complete and final expression of the mind of God. There is about its utterances an inevitable relativity. They stand related to a particular historical situation, a particular period of ethical and religious development, a particular stage of revelation. This principle is recognized by our Lord himself when he maintained that the Deuteronomic law of divorce (Deut. xxiv. 1 ff.) had been given because of the hardness of the people's heart (Mark x. 5). It is not, he admitted, an ideal law—the ideal relation of man and woman was finely suggested in another part of the Pentateuch (Gen. ii. 24); but it was a law adapted to given regrettable circumstances, and it would be replaced by a better when the ethical temper of society improved. This, then, is another necessary principle of interpretation, to bear in mind the relativity of Biblical utterances, and to regard only those as normative for us which are the highest—in plain words, those which are in harmony with the mind of Christ.

Literary form must also occasionally be considered.

It would be an injustice to poetry, for example, to treat its imaginations and metaphors as if they were the bald statements of some historical annal; but this is just what has repeatedly been done. From Joshua's fine apostrophe to the sun and moon in Josh. x. 12–14, a miracle of the most stupendous proportions has been altogether needlessly inferred, by those who did not remember or did not clearly understand that this quotation was admittedly taken from the Book of Jashar, which, being a book of poetry, could not without the greatest injustice be tested by the canons applicable to historical prose. Or again, take the incomparable stories of the temptation and fall at the beginning of Genesis, with their speaking serpent, their miraculous trees, their God who walks about his garden in the cool of the day and speaks face to face to Adam as to his friend. Are we to take all this literally as an historical account of the introduction of sin into our human world? And if so, what guarantee can we possibly have that these things actually happened as they are related? For manifestly the experiences of the first human beings lie far beyond the reach of human memory or tradition, and the narrative itself makes no claim to be a direct revelation from God. Or is it not equally competent, and far more consonant with all we know of literature and history, to regard these narratives as embodying very ancient mythical material, but inspired with conceptions of God and duty and sin which put them into a category entirely by themselves, and enable us to say that there is nothing like them in all the world?

Even the words of Jesus are frequently touched with the spirit of poetry, and to forget this is to be betrayed into wooden and unreal interpretations. Probably even a literalist would think twice before taking the

following word at its face value: "If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell" (Mark ix. 47). But it would be just as ridiculous to take literally the word, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two." Literal obedience would be more feasible in this case than in the other, but it would be as remote as possible from the mind of Jesus; it would be two miles travelled in the direction of that very legalism which the daring precept of Jesus was designed to repudiate. This gospel of the second mile is intended to suggest the spirit in which even the first mile should be covered, and which would carry a true disciple not only over two miles, but over mile after mile of a long and weary way. The language of the Bible is largely poetry, and must not be treated as prose.

(3) But to pass from questions of literary form. The proper method of Biblical interpretation is to find out, by humble, careful and earnest study, the mind that was in Jesus Christ, and to apply this test to all the Biblical phenomena. He has left us a memorable example of His own attitude. When James and John, provoked at the refusal of the Samaritans to receive Jesus, asked for permission to call down fire from heaven and consume them—(no doubt they had the example of Elijah in mind, whether, as in our common text, they alluded to it or not)—Jesus turned and rebuked them; and these words, though not found in all the manuscripts, certainly give the mind of Jesus: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." There were two spirits—the fierce, devouring spirit of Elijah, and the gentle, forgiving spirit of Jesus. The former cannot dwell in the breasts of those who truly understand Jesus, and even though it be a great prophet who displayed that spirit, his act is to be regretted

and condemned. Possible and natural at a certain stage of religious development, it must not exist among men who own the Lordship of Jesus.

At this point serious questions might be raised about the teaching of the Bible in the Sunday school, and especially about the choice of selections on the basis of which that teaching should be conducted. If it be granted that the object of the Sunday school is, broadly speaking, to create and foster within the pupil the spirit and the ideal of Jesus, and to promote His development towards mature Christian character, then it must be admitted that some of the strictures recently passed upon the average curriculum by Dr A. J. W. Myers, in his able and interesting book on *The Old Testament in the Sunday School* (Columbia University), are justified. "The offering of Isaac," he says, "has been used for primary children as an example of obedience. Even if this were the point of the story, the taking of a boy's life with a gleaming knife is not the kind of picture to help a child. Neither is the conception of God making such a demand, or of a father obeying even if God could be conceived of as asking it, the Christian idea" (p. 58). And with regard to the story of Jephthah's daughter, he remarks: "The story of a father taking his daughter's life is surely not suited to nourish Christian character in a little child" (p. 116). Thus the question of how to interpret is closely connected with the question of what to interpret, and both have the most vital bearing upon the curriculum of the Sunday school, and upon the contents and the nature of the truth that shall be presented to the scholar.

(4) Lastly, it has to be remembered that God is spirit, and that religion is, therefore, a thing of the spirit, not a thing of ordinances, commands, prohibitions. Jesus does not legislate, He inspires. To Him

there are not ten commandments, but two—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbour"; or rather not two commandments, but one—the royal law of love. In vain would we go to the prophets, or even to Jesus, for specific legislation regarding the problems of modern society. "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" He takes no side in our class quarrels. "There is no ground," as Professor Peabody wisely says, "for believing that Jesus proposed to array the poor against the rich or to set the one social class on His right hand and the other on His left. The fact is that His teaching moved in a world of thought and desire where such distinctions became unimportant. It is, in one sense, extraordinarily detached from the problem of social distinctions and commercial prosperity. Jesus is not a social demagogue; He is a spiritual seer. He is not concerned with the levelling of social classes, but with the elevating of social ideals. He welcomes a life for its own sake, not for its circumstances of wealth or of poverty." A similar timely warning with regard to the study of the prophets has recently been urged by Mr Louis Wallis, in his suggestive book on *The Sociological Study of the Bible*. "The Bible," he reminds us, "has been quoted in modern times as an authority for social radicalism. The hobby-rider has gone to it in search of material to support his cause. Passages that seem to favour his programme of revolution have been cited, while the rest of the Bible has been ignored. His interest in the Scriptures attaches only to a few verses or passages. In other words, particular texts have been used . . . without studying their context—*i.e.*, the other material which bears on their meaning. Our present study shows what a mistake it is to use the Bible in this way" (p. 160).

The Bible does not come to us, superimposing itself upon our minds and consciences as a sort of external authority, or presenting us with an easy and simple solution of the problems of individul or social life. Its function is rather to create an atmosphere, to set all human problems in the light of God's countenance —for "in Thy light we see light"—and to bring to bear upon them that mind which was in Jesus Christ, the mind of unselfishness, of humility, of faith, and freedom and courage. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and in the man who is truly inspired by it there will be no anxious subservience to the letter which stifles and kills, but for him life will be one glad and constant walk in the spirit which maketh free.

III

HELLENISM AND HEBRAISM [1]

To sum up the spirit and temper of two great peoples like the Greeks and the Hebrews within the compass of a brief paper will seem possible only to one who has not rightly measured the task. The Greeks were too versatile and the Hebrews too profound to lend themselves to such summary treatment. We can hope to do no more than point out one or two of the more salient features that distinguish the Hellenic from the Hebraic type of thought. Of course, between these peoples, as perhaps between all peoples, there exist more points of contact than of conflict. The New Testament was written in Greek by Hebrews; that is a point of vast significance. It means that there is no fundamental antagonism between these two types, widely as they differ. No doubt to one who has trained his taste on the models of classical style, the style of the New Testament will often seem lame and barbarous. Yet the fact that there exists a living and demonstrable continuity between the language of Plato and that of Paul—the fact that the great watchwords of the New Testament, such as *faith* and *righteousness*, are to be found everywhere in classical literature, and have been developed by a perfectly natural and historical process into the rich connotation which they bear in the pages of the gospels and the epistles—is enough to suggest that the genius of the Greek and Hebrew peoples was, though vastly

[1] From *The American Journal of Theology*.

different, yet not fundamentally distinct. But we are at present more concerned with their differences than with their similarity. And to ascertain where precisely the difference lay, it may be well to begin at the outside; for the form in which a people expresses itself will always be in some more or less faithful correspondence with its inner thought.

Now, of form, in the classical sense of the word, Hebrew has little or none. The ceaseless repetition of the particle for *and* alike in the Old Testament and the New; the co-ordination of thoughts of different value which the Greek would have expressed by some subtle subordination; the existence of practically only two tenses which have to do duty, not only for themselves and sundry other tenses, but for moods as well —all these things point to a certain syntactical helplessness, which is only the grammatical side of the Hebrew indifference to form. Perhaps the critic who spoke of the quotation in the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (v. 14) as a "broken fragment of shapeless barbaric verse,"

> "Awake, thou that sleepest,
> And arise from the dead,
> And Christ shall shine upon thee,"

forgot that we are not the best judges of the impression that such a verse produced on the ears of a Greek Christian; yet few would deny that it is, at any rate, a long step from that to the elegance of Pindar.

This disregard of form—a disregard which, in the light of the second commandment, we are almost entitled to pronounce religious—is also strikingly seen in the ease with which a Hebrew historian sets side by side two different and often palpably contradictory accounts of the same event, and also in the occasional disregard of inherent congruity with which two conflicting versions are fused together. At bottom, this is an

artistic defect; and where the Hebrew mind is weak, the Greek is strong. Aristotle, in the *Poetics*,[1] lays down the law that, in a tragedy, nothing is more important than the arrangement of the incident; it is the "soul of the tragedy," more important even than the correct delineation of character. Reverse this, and you have approximately the Hebrew conception of the relation of character to incident. No doubt, even in Hebrew literature, the arrangement of the incident is often highly artistic: nothing could be more dramatic than the stories of Joseph and Esther. But, in the main, to the Hebrew it is character that is the be-all and end-all. Hebrew genius is subjective, spontaneous; it does not discuss, examine, compare, criticize. This disqualified the Hebrew from the successful pursuit of philosophy. He has hardly any particle to correspond to the Greek ἄρα or οὖν; when he says "therefore," לָכֵן, he is usually not concluding an argument, but announcing a moral judgment. The Greek keeps himself well in hand; the Hebrew lets himself go. Greek may be simple as well as Hebrew; but the one is the simplicity of conscious or instinctive art, the other of nature. Hebrew may, indeed, often give us the artlessness which is higher than art; but it is not conscious art. The Hebrew cared much less for the form than for the content. His thoughts were inspirations of the most high God; as for the words, "be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak; but *whatsoever shall be given you* in that hour, that speak ye, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."

It is partly perhaps this consciousness of God that gives to Hebrew literature its spontaneity in comparison with Greek. "Men spoke from God, *being borne on by the Holy Spirit.*" How wide is the gulf between this and the conscious effort put forth by the

[1] vi. 9.

typical Greek—by Demosthenes, for example, who is said to have acquired his style by copying out the history of Thucydides eight times; or by Plato, after whose death a tablet is said to have been found containing the opening words of the *Republic*, κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραῖα, written out in all the possible permutations! To Plato, the most serious and beautiful-souled of the Greeks, style still counts for much; besides being one of the great original thinkers of the world, he is also a conscious literary artist. But the Hebrew world which set the hope of its redemption in the suffering servant, whose vision was marred, and who had no beauty that men should desire him, is a world in which grace of form or of language, though very far from absent, is not the object of the same conscious effort, for the realities of the inner life and thought are all-absorbing. The second commandment gives expression to one of the deepest instincts of the Hebrew nature at its best: "Thou shalt not make unto thee the likeness of any form." The true Hebrew, like his God, looks upon the heart; the Greek is as much concerned to impress the ear and the eye as the soul. This does not mean, of course, that the Greek cared supremely for style, and very little for content; for no one can throw his thought into a truly artistic mould till he has completely mastered it; but it means that the Greek always retains the power of standing outside the matter with which he is dealing, of looking round upon it with a critical eye, and refusing to be mastered by it.

The note, then, of Hebrew will be reality, with enthusiasm at least for moral interests. It is characteristic that the Hebrew equivalent of our word *pursue* is relatively more frequent in Hebrew than the corresponding words in other literatures, and it occurs often in quaint combinations, as does its Greek equivalent in the New Testament. The impetuous

Justice, justice shalt thou pursue[1] which, whether we regard its use of the verb, its repetition of the noun, or its fierce insistence on character, is one of the most characteristic sayings in the Old Testament, offered a stumbling-block to the Greek translator, whose tame equivalent is "Justly shalt thou pursue justice." The note of Hellenism, on the other hand, is balance, symmetry, an impartial distribution of sympathy, not only on the moral side of life, but in every sphere of human activity, the moral hardly even predominating. To the Greek more truly than to most could the lines of Terence be applied: "Humani nihil a me alienum puto." In his history, his poetry, and his philosophy he preserves an even balance of sympathy; he cannot even look virtue straight in the face, but has to define it as the mean between two vices. This is perhaps only another way of saying that he contemplates the world from a predominantly æsthetic, rather than from an ethical or religious, standpoint. Naturally this statement is true only with great and serious restrictions. Much of Greek tragic poetry could fairly be called religious even in a narrow sense of that word; and the work of Herodotus is the Greek attempt to justify the ways of God to men by showing on a gigantic scale how pride is followed by the vengeance of heaven. But though large and important tracts of Greek literature sometimes assume a semi-religious form, it is still true that the Greek diffuses his sympathy with something like even-handed impartiality and with no special regard for moral considerations, over all the parties that file before him. He does not see them in the light of God, and so is under no obligation to take sides. He is attracted by the humanity that

[1] Deut. xvi. 20. The *that which is altogether just shalt thou follow* of the English versions, gives little idea of the fierce strength of the original.

is in them both—in the one not less than in the other.

It is startling to find how far the great Greek writers carry their impartiality—an impartiality which we might mistake for indifference, did we not remember that it is conditioned by the power of wide and generous sympathy. It is in a Trojan home that Homer has given us the purest picture of domestic love and conjugal happiness. Herodotus, too, does ample justice to the nobler qualities of the Persians. It is no part of Greek literary policy to vilify opponents; and we need not resort to the subtle assumption that the glorification of the enemy is intended to enhance the greatness of the victory over them. Rather does it seem due to what Julia Wedgwood has called the "spirit which insists on hearing the other side." No writer possesses this dramatic impartiality in so high a degree as Thucydides. To those who can read between the lines it is quite clear that the Spartan Brasidas is his hero, and the same spirit of fairness is everywhere. It was no congenial story of triumph that he had to tell, no brilliant tale like that of Herodotus—of how the might of Persia had dashed itself to pieces against the bravery of Greece. But he told it with matchless impartiality—the story of the ruin of the cause of the city he must have loved—how one bright day her splendid fleet set sail, amid the shouts of the people gathered on the shore; how drink-offerings were poured out to the gods, and their blessing invoked; and how those high hopes were slowly crushed by the tidings of disaster upon disaster; how at length the Athenian cause was shattered, her men suffering sorrows too great for tears, and few out of many returned home. There is no rancour here against the Athenians who had banished him, nor yet against the Syracusans who had crushed his

countrymen; it is simply a calm recital of historical fact, coloured neither by moral nor by party considerations. Syracuse came as much within the sweep of his historical vision as Athens, and therefore demanded and received the same historical justice.

There is a passage in the biography of Thucydides by Marcellinus which sheds a curious light upon this Greek, or at any rate Thucydidean, genius for impartiality. He tells us that Thucydides spent large sums of money on the Lacedæmonians and the Athenians, so that he might have accurate information of all that was done and said during the war. "This he might have learned," says Marcellinus, "from the Athenians alone, but it was his object to write a truthful narrative of the events, and it was natural that the Athenians should misrepresent the reports to their own advantage, often saying '*We* conquered,' when they had done nothing of the kind." Thucydides tells us himself that he scrutinized the accounts of speeches or events as closely as possible, and that he experienced great difficulty in the investigation as there were often conflicting accounts of the same incidents due to the partiality or the bad memories of his informants.[1] To this stern impartiality he makes no exception even in favour of himself. He refers to his own banishment in a tone of the most complete disinterestedness, merely to account for the special opportunities which his position gave him of following the chances of the war. "It was my lot," he says, "to live in exile for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis. I thus became conversant with both parties—indeed, as an exile, I saw most of the Peloponnesians—and was enabled to study the events more at my leisure."[2] Here is impartiality at its zenith. No Hebrew could have written that; he would have imparted more

[1] i. 22, 3. [2] v. 26, 5.

personal feeling to it. The passion of the Hebrew historian for his people and his God beats behind the plainest narratives. There is never wanting something of that feeling which inspired the prayer of Moses: "If Thou wilt not forgive the sin of this people, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written;" or of St Paul: "I could wish that myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." Almost all the work of the Hebrew historian was inspired either by a love for his people, or by a desire to illustrate the moral order, or rather the divine discipline and love in history. His work is instinct with religious enthusiasm; it glows with a passion, distorted —Thucydides might have said—on the one side, in the interests of nationality, on the other, in the interests of righteousness.

Enough has been said to show that there was a wide difference of temper and character between the Greeks and the Hebrews. To show how deep this difference really lay, we shall dwell for a little on what we may call points of contact and conflict between Hebraism and Hellenism; and we shall find that, numerous as the former seem to be, they only serve to strengthen our conviction of the deep, though not radical, difference between the two peoples. Numerous passages could be culled from every period of Greek literature, in which we seem to hear the echo of the Old Testament or the prophecy of the New. We find Themistocles giving thanks to heaven for the Greek triumph over the Persians, in language which reminds us forcibly of Joshua's farewell address to Israel: "For it is not we who have wrought this deliverance, but the gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should reign over Asia and Europe, and he unholy and wicked."[1] The aged knight Phœnix, in Homer, urges

[1] Herodotus, viii. 109, 4. Josh. xxiii. 9, xxiv. 8.

the value of prayer in words that recall the goodness of the Father who hears in secret and gives men the victory over sin. "Even the very gods can bend. . . . Prayers are daughters of the great Zeus, halting and wrinkled and of eyes askance, that have their task withal to go in the steps of Sin. For Sin is strong and fleet of foot, wherefore she far outrunneth all prayers, and goeth before them over all the earth, making men fall, and Prayers follow behind to heal the harm."[1] Striking, too, is the couplet in the Anthology:

> "He who enters the fragrant temple must be holy.
> And holiness is purity of mind."

There is something almost distinctively Christian in the line of Menander: "True life is living not for self alone." Plato, the most profound of all the Greek seers, must have looked upon life with Christian eyes when, in the *Symposium* (203) he wrote: "Love is always poor, and is far from being fair and tender as the many suppose, but is lean, ill-favoured, shoeless and houseless, a poor, penniless wanderer, sleeping at doorways, or on waysides with the sky above him."

But there is no single Greek book which seems to present both the points of contact and of conflict so strikingly as the *Ethics* of Aristotle; and we shall conclude our summary of the former by calling attention to three passages—though the number could be greatly increased—which come astonishingly near to the spirit of the New Testament and even to its phraseology. "A man is not proved to be just," he tells us, "by doing a just thing; he must do it in the spirit of a just man." Again: "It is a strongly marked feature of the liberal man to go to excess in giving, so as to leave too little for himself; for dis-

[1] *Iliad*, ix. 496.

regard of self is part of his character" [1]—a tolerably close approximation to the saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But the correspondence reaches perhaps its highest point in Aristotle's description of the good as that which is peculiarly a man's own and can scarce be taken away from him.[2] Who that reads this can help thinking of the peace of God, which the world can neither give nor take away?

But great and often surprising as is the resemblance between the Hebraic and the Hellenic spirit, it only serves to throw into sharper relief the deep-seated difference. To balance the passages quoted, many more could be adduced which could have come from no Hebrew pen—passages in which the great and guiding thoughts of Hebraism are characteristically absent. "The happy man," says Aristotle, "is one who exercises his faculties in accordance with perfect excellence, being duly furnished with external goods for a full term of years, who shall continue to live so, and shall die as he lived." [3] We cannot help wondering what he would have thought of Him who had not where to lay His head, and who yet lived in the blessed and abiding fellowship of the Father. Again, it is a far cry from the dictum that "virtue depends upon ourselves" [4] to the confession that our sufficiency is of God. Again, in Aristotle's discussion of temperance there is no trace of the thought that this is a duty to God as well as to ourselves, our bodies being temples of the living God. Plato, in the *Phædo*, works out the thought expressed in the proverb *sōma sēma*, that the body is a prison; Paul, too, cries in a moment of transport: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But Plato's desire to escape from the body was inspired by the thought of the evil of matter; Paul's, by the thought of the exceeding sinfulness of

[1] *Ethics*, iv. 1, 18. [2] i. 5, 4. [3] i. 10, 15. [4] iii. 5, 2.

sin. The typical Greek has no sense of the struggle with sin, and no sympathy with the cry, "Oh wretched man that I am!" He has no conception of the world or the individual as needing redemption, and so feels no obligation to exercise a redemptive activity in the sphere of human sin or suffering. The Greek ideal, as Aristotle reminds us,[1] is not action, but contemplation. "If we were to go through the whole list of virtues," he says, "we should find that all action is petty and unworthy of the gods: their life then must consist in contemplation."[2] Contrast this with: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

On the whole, the Greek tends to emphasize the value of principle; the Hebrew, of personality—neither, of course, to the exclusion of the other. Plato refers all things in the world of being and of thought to "the unhypothetical first principle," that is, "the good." But though, in his glowing pages, this is not the cold and lifeless abstraction which most first principles are, it is a long way from the living simplicity and power of the Hebrew Jehovah. The same tendency—natural, of course, in a philosophical discussion—to emphasize the importance of principles, comes out in the great phrase of the *Ethics* that good actions are to be done "for the sake of that which is noble." And yet both Plato and Aristotle feel the need of supplementing principle, at least for most men, by an appeal to personality: Plato, when he tells us in a tone, half of hope, half of despair, that the world will never be right till philosophers are kings; and Aristotle, who practically concedes the necessity of reasoning in a circle on moral questions, when he says, "that is truly valuable and pleasant which is so to the earnest man."[3] Such words force us to feel that the Greek heart, in its effort to solve the world-

[1] *Ethics*, x. 7, 1. [2] x. 8, 7. [3] x. 6, 5

riddle, felt no less than the Hebrew the need for some "son of man," some living embodiment of Truth.

When the Greek forgets himself and instead of keeping rigidly to his discussion of principle, draws the picture of his ideal man, we feel how much better adapted the Hebrew genius was than the Greek to teach humanity the harder lessons and the nobler ideals of religion. The high-minded or great-souled man of Aristotle, who may fairly be taken as the Greek ideal, is one who claims much and deserves much; one who will not run into petty dangers, but will be ready to incur a great danger, feeling that life is not a thing worth keeping at all costs; one who will be more willing to confer favours than to ask them; one who will not do many things, but great things, and notable, one who speaks the whole truth, hates gossip, and despises flattery; one who will not run along swinging his arms any more than he would commit an act of injustice; one whose gait is slow, whose voice is deep, and whose speech is measured: why should he excite himself when nothing is of very much importance to him?[1] It is only fair to remember that if the high-minded man claims much, it is because he deserves much: high-mindedness is impossible without the union of all the virtues. Still we cannot help feeling, with a tragic intensity of which Aristotle did not dream, that his high-minded man "seems to look down upon everything," and to exhibit in his character a certain superciliousness which is the very antipodes, not only of the Christian, but even of the finer Hebrew type of humility. For the Hebrew consciousness was always overshadowed by the presence of God, and this produced—not indeed always, but very often—a temper of self-dissatisfaction which we rarely find among the Greeks. The ideal

[1] *Ethics*, iv. 3.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

man of the fifteenth psalm has several points in common with his Greek brother; but the opening question of the psalm carries us into a different world of religious feeling, by contemplating human character in the light of God.

> "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in Thy tent?
> Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"

The conception of God made all the difference. It was this that made the Hebrew feel that when he had done his best he was still an unprofitable servant.

This will be a convenient place to say a word about Greek religion. It has been said that Greek religion is a religion of this world. If this were true, it would find its analogy in the religion of the Old Testament. But, like most epigrammatic utterances, this is only half a truth. It is true, indeed, that though the death of Œdipus is invested with solemn glory, there is no hint of a blessedness that will be his in the next world; but, on the other hand, Antigone consoles herself with a hope, that is almost a certainty, that she will find in the other world the love she has missed in this. In the main, however, it is true that Greek religion concerns itself chiefly with this world. It seeks its compensations here, and is disappointed when it does not find them. The few words in which Thucydides sums up the character and fate of the unfortunate Nicias sound like the expression of perplexity and disappointment. "Of all the Greeks of my time," says the historian, "he least deserved so miserable an end, for he lived in the performance of all that was accounted virtue."[1]

The popular Greek conception of deity is singularly vacillating; it hardly seems to know whether God is one or many, moral or immoral. Tales the most

[1] vii. 86, 5.

noble and the most base jostle each other on the pages of the poets. But, in spite of this confusion—a confusion which tends to vanish with the progress of Greek thought—there are elements in Greek theology making for monotheism and morality from the very first. Even in the Homeric times, which rejoiced in a multitude of gods, there is one who is Father. This is the beginning of that feeling which finally learned to designate the deity in terms of the most rarefied metaphysical unity as *That which is*. The tragic poets stand midway between the popular polytheism of their contemporaries and the philosophical monotheism of Plato, with more leaning to the latter than the former. A chorus in the *Agamemnon*[1] begins an appeal to Zeus with a peculiarly un-Hebraic hesitation :

> "Zeus, whosoe'er he be,
> If this be the name he loves ; "

and it is said that "some (τις) Apollo or Pan or Zeus will send a late-avenging fury."[2] The monotheistic instinct was also to some extent satisfied by the Greek conception of *Moira*, or Fate, as a power which lay behind both gods and men.

On the metaphysical side of Greek theology there are hints, and more than hints, of monotheism. What is to be said of the ethical side ? What was the character of the god or gods ? Human feelings are ascribed to the gods by Greek and Hebrew alike, with this difference, that the anthropopathy, as it has been called, of the Hebrews—that is, the ascription of fear or wrath, scorn or repentance—is hardly ever repulsive, while that of the Greek is often shocking even to a not over-refined moral sense, though this is true mainly of the earlier poetical and popular conceptions. Homer and Hesiod, for example, are fiercely attacked

[1] 160 f. [2] 55-59.

by the poet-philosopher Xenophanes for having "ascribed to the gods all that is blame and shame among men—theft, adultery, and mutual deceit." Pindar, too, has not scrupled to alter stories discreditable to the gods to suit the high purposes of his own pure verse. For the highest, and therefore not the average, conception we must turn to Plato, who, in a trenchant protest against popular ideas, vigorously maintains that we must conceive of God as the author of good only, and not of evil also; and also as wholly unchangeable, and so incapable of the metamorphoses which figure so prominently in poetry. But more may be learned of the typical Greek mind from the historians and the poets than from Plato. They tell us that the gods love the good and hate the bad, especially the proud, and, curiously enough, not only the proud, but the successful, at any rate the too successful. This divine jealousy of human success is one of the familiar marks of Greek theology. Both the ethical and the anthropopathic views of deity are combined in the passage of Herodotus already quoted, where the gods are said to be jealous that one man should rule over both Asia and Europe, and he, too, unholy and wicked. The gods were bound to hate Xerxes because he was wicked: they were no less bound to hate him—so thought the Greek—because he was powerful. Prosperity seems to have been the only crime of Polycrates. The gods are jealous of men who stand head and shoulders above their fellows, in somewhat the same way as Hebrew tradition ascribes to Jehovah jealousy of the builders of the tower of Babel. "Deity is always jealous," says Herodotus in another passage, "and delights in confusion."[1] The whole history of Herodotus is a brilliant and impressive sermon on the text, "The gods love to

[1] i. 32, 2.

bring down high things." The Persian disasters were the divine vengeance on insolence. This thought brings us back to the principle with which we started—the Greek love of balance—and shows us that the gods were conceived to be governed by the same passion for symmetry that ought to determine human action. He who had been guilty of insolence, he who was too prosperous or too rich, must be punished by the Greek god of proportion.

With this thought let us pass to the consideration of the Hebrew and the Greek view of suffering. It is well known how the Hebrew writers solved, or rather approached the solution of the suffering of the good man; how the man who did what was right was divinely rewarded with material prosperity, while misfortune was the divine curse on sin; how the sufferings of the exile taught men the inadequacy of the older solution; how an unknown prophet softened the bitterness of the sorrow by teaching that the servant of Jehovah may be wounded to heal transgressions that were not his own; how the great writer of the Book of Job found comfort in a larger thought of God; how at length the problem received its living solution in the cross of Christ. No such powerful comprehension of the place and meaning of suffering in human life has been given by the Greeks. They have taught us much, but it was not their mission to teach us that. Still, Greek literature does answer this problem in a way of its own, and there can be no better point for starting the discussion than the famous passage in the *Poetics*, in which Aristotle lays down the conditions of a successful tragedy: "We must not have good men," he tells us, "changing from prosperity to adversity—this would not be pitiful or terrible, but shocking—nor bad men changing from adversity to prosperity, nor very wicked men from

prosperity to adversity, for this evokes sympathy, but one neither pre-eminent for virtue or justice, nor falling into adversity through vice or wickedness, but through some flaw, being a person of great repute and prosperity." [1] That is to say, where there is suffering, there must be some *hamartia*—not sin, but flaw, defect of character or error of temper—to account for it. But this only restates the problem without solving it, for the difficulty remains that the punishment is often in such pathetic disproportion to the crime, if crime it can be called. True, when we scan a tragic character closely, there is always some flaw or failing; in Œdipus there was rashness, temper, impetuosity; in Antigone—well, it is more difficult to condemn her, for if she has broken the law of the state and should suffer, she has kept the higher law of the family and should be saved. Still, from the Greek point of view, it could be urged that she showed a boldness both of deed and word which was not seemly in a woman. Here, at least, is a *hamartia* which would satisfy the Greek view of character, though surely it hardly merits such a tragic penalty; and so the riddle remains. But here and there the light breaks through. The mystery of suffering can in part be explained; it may be due, for example, to ancestral guilt. This is the idea so magnificently worked out in the *Oresteia* of Æschylus, and in this conception two ideas meet which partly reconcile us to innocent suffering. The one is that the guilt of ancestors is in some sense our own, as we are bound to them by a common life and spirit; the other is that the tragedy ultimately comes about through the exercise of free will on the part of the sufferer.

Further, suffering teaches: there are few thoughts commoner in Greek literature than this, which was

[1] xiii. 2, 3.

stereotyped in a proverbial phrase.[1] It may help to sweeten and purify character, as it did with Œdipus, whose old age is invested with a grace which his middle life knew not; or it may establish a higher law, as the death of Antigone wrought a victory for the family which her obedience to the state could never have done. Often, too, there is some kind of compensation to the sufferer, sometimes in this world, sometimes in that which is to come. To the old, blind, and broken-hearted king comes the honour of burial in the sacred grove of the Eumenides; and "the passing of the man was not with lamentation, or in sickness and suffering, but, above mortal's, wonderful."[2] Antigone, too, finds comfort in the thought of the future. "When I come there—such is the hope I cherish—I shall find love with my father, love with thee, my mother, and love with thee, true brother."[3] And, besides the possible compensations of this world or the next, the sufferer always retains a consciousness of his own integrity, of which no misfortune can rob him. "True worth," says Aristotle, "shines out in the calm endurance of many great misfortunes;" and yet his hero, as we have seen, is not a sufferer. For the adequate recognition of the beauty of sorrow we must go to that most Christian of all the Greek thinkers, Plato, whose rapt words seem to fall from the lips of one who had gazed prophetically upon the cross of Christ. For Plato tells of one who had done all "that he could for his people, and had received from them nothing but scorn; so, in the storm of dust and sleet, he seeks the shelter of a wall; and seeing the rest of mankind full of wickedness, he is content if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil or unrighteousness, and

[1] *Pathemata mathemata.* [2] *Œdipus Coloneus*, 1663 ff.
[3] *Antigone*, 897 ff.

depart in peace and goodwill, with bright hopes." [1] With a still deeper glance into the mysteries of God, he sees one who is the best of men, going on his way in his nobleness and simplicity, yet thought to be the worst of men; he sees him scourged, racked, bound, subjected to every kind of evil, and in the end crucified.[2] Here Greek thought becomes Christian. As there was one Jew, in the person of the great prophet of the exile, to whom the cross would not have been a stumbling-block, so there was at least one Greek, in the person of Plato, to whom it would not have been foolishness.

The consideration of the suffering of the innocent leads us by an easy transition to the Greek thought of the sadness of all human life. So keen was the Greek sense of beauty, and so numerous its sources of satisfaction, so versatile was the genius of the people and so triumphant in its versatility, that one would have expected them to be possessed by the feeling which thrilled the poet of a later day: "Joy was it in that day to be alive." Yet, this is very far from being the predominant note of Greek literature. The consciousness of the presence of God and of fellowship with Him gave to the Hebrew, even when humbled by a sense of sin, and overpowered by the thought that he was but a stranger and sojourner upon the earth, a sense of peace which not only reconciled him to his lot in the world, but touched his sorrow with gladness, gave him a certain delight in life, and sometimes, though not always, a fearlessness at the contemplation of death, to which the Greek, for the most part, remained a stranger. This note of sadness is struck as early as Homer. "There is nothing more piteous," says Zeus to the weeping horses of Achilles, "than a man among all things that

[1] *Republic*, vi. 496. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 361.

breathe and creep upon the earth," [1] and gently or loudly this dirge is heard from the beginning to the end. Solon told Crœsus of two young men of Argos, strong, and victors in the public games, who had drawn their mother in a car six whole miles to the festival of Hera. The proud mother prayed that Hera would grant her sons the greatest blessing men could receive; and they fell softly asleep in the temple, and never woke again.[2] Verily, all of us who live are no more than phantoms, fleeting shades, the shadow of a dream—that is the burden of tragic poetry. No wise man will crave length of years; for "the long years," sings the chorus in the *Œdipus Coloneus*,[3] "lay up full many things nearer unto grief than joy; but, as for their delights, their place shall know them no more, when the doom of Hades is suddenly revealed, without marriage song, or lyre, or dance—even Death at the last." The whole passage strikingly recalls Ecclesiastes, that least Biblical of all Biblical books; and the chorus goes on in a strain that not only rises again and again from the Greek heart in every period of its life, but that often expresses itself in almost the same words: "Not to be born is, past all prizing, best; but when a man hath seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go back to the land whence he hath come." [4]

But it is perhaps in the later poets of the *Anthology*, who had seen the decay of all that was most distinctively Greek, and were peculiarly impressed by the frailty of all human things, that the melancholy of life is most persistently reiterated. Rufinus sends a bunch of flowers to a girl with the words:

> "Garland thyself with these, and cease thy pride:
> Thou like the garland, too, dost flower and fall."

---

[1] *Iliad*, xvii. 443–47.
[2] Herodotus, i. 31.
[3] 1215 ff.
[4] 1225 f.

How can life but be sad, when we have only "chance as pilot" of our way? So "all is laughter, and all is dust, and all is naught." "Weeping was I born," mourns one, "and weeping I die; 'mid plenteous weeping did I pass my life." There is deep pathos as well as humour in the lines:

> "Here lie I, Dionysius of Tarsus, aged sixty years;
> I never wed; I wish my father had never."

Very touching too is this epitaph on a baby:

> "Me, a babe, that was but tasting life, fate snatched away, whether for good or ill I know not. Oh greedy death! Why didst thou cruelly snatch me in my babyhood? wherefore thy haste? are we not all thine in the end?"

Naturally the pathos of life finds repeated expression in Hebrew Literature. Sadness there must be in any true transcript of life; and most of all where men deeply feel, as the Hebrews did, the sin or transiency of the world. It was voiced now and then by psalmists who felt that they were strangers on the earth, and that man flourisheth as the flower of the field. "What is your life?" asks a Christian writer. "For ye are a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But how does it come that Greece is so sad? How is it that those laughter-loving children of the purple mountains and the sunlit sea, who spent their days amid the inspiration of blue skies and valleys of bewitching beauty, who at festive seasons listened to the most rhythmic and melodious word-music and looked upon the fairest sculptured forms that ever came from the heart of man—how is it that this people of all peoples should have felt so overpoweringly that life was but laughter and vanity? This feeling of the tragedy of life, which comes with such a shock of surprise upon those who have been only impressed by the bright and vivacious genius of Greece and by the beauty and

splendour of her creations, was due, partly to that artistic balance of mind which impelled her to face both sides of a great question, and to see life in the shadow of death; partly also it was due to her history and experience, and partly no doubt to the absence of any penetrating consciousness of God. She had seen, as early as Homer, in the fall of the autumn leaf, a prophecy of the fate of every human life. She had seen the decline and fall of at least one great empire. During the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars—that is, through all the period of her real greatness in literature, politics, and enterprise—there can have been few families which had not lost a member in battle. Small wonder that, with such an experience, Greece should have felt the pathos of life. But most of all, no doubt, was this feeling due to the fact that the typical Greek, whose ideal was self-sufficiency, had no sense of fellowship with God. He did not walk through this world before God or with Him, and so knew nothing of the joy of this communion, or of its power to banish fear and sorrow. At the very bottom, it is the consciousness of God that made life so different for the Hebrew and the Greek. It is this consciousness that is responsible for most of the serious divergences between the temper and aspirations of those two great peoples. It was this that inspired the Hebrew with his passion for morality and religion. It was this that made him a worshipper, while the Greek remained an artist and a critic. It was this that lightened the mystery of suffering, lifted much of life's sadness, and helped the Hebrew to overcome the world. The Greek might have said: "We have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear," but no one could have said with such passion or truth as the Hebrew: "Mine eye hath seen Thee."

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

IV

THE CHARACTER OF SAUL[1]

A BIOGRAPHICAL sketch of Saul is beset by peculiar difficulties. No progress can be made in the attempt to unravel the mystery of this man's life until we frankly recognize that the story of that life is really twice told in the books of Samuel—told, too, from different, and some would even say conflicting, points of view. Everyone who reads the narrative with any attention must have been struck by the different attitudes to the kingship maintained by chaps. viii. and ix. respectively. According to the one, the king is a gift of God, welcome as a means of uniting the nation against the assaults of the Philistines (1 Sam. ix. 16). According to the other, the desire for an earthly king is interpreted as a rejection of the unseen king, Jehovah (1 Sam. viii. 7). Further, the origin of the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" is connected with two different incidents in the life of Saul (1 Sam. x. 12, xix. 24). Again, the combination of one story with the other completely destroys many a splendid dramatic effect which becomes plain as day the moment each narrative is read by itself. In reality, the battle of Gilboa (chap. xxxi.) dramatically follows Saul's interview with the witch of Endor (chap. xxviii.); whereas, in the present form of the book, this sequence is broken by fragments of a biography of David. This point need not here be further elaborated; but an analysis of the book, resting on these and similar hints,

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

leads approximately to the following results: The earlier story includes 1 Samuel ix. 1—x. 16, chaps. xi., xiii. (all but *vv.* 7*b*–15*a*), xiv., xvi. 14–23, xviii. 6–30, xix. 11–17, xxi. 1–9, chaps. xxii. (except *vv.* 3–5), xxiii., xxv., xxvi., xxvii. 1—xxviii. 2, chaps. xxix., xxx.; 2 Samuel, chap. i. The later story includes 1 Samuel, chap. viii., x. 17–27, chaps. xii., xv., xvi. 1–13, xvii. 1—xviii. 5, chap. xix. (except *vv.* 11–17), xxi. 10–15, xxii. 3–5, chap. xxiv., xxviii. 3–25, chap. xxxi.; 2 Samuel ii. 4*b*–7. The omitted verses appear to be fragments from other sources, and even the two leading narratives may not be altogether homogeneous.

We shall now briefly outline these narratives, confining ourselves in the main to the biography of Saul; for the story of David's earlier years is also largely interwoven with that of Saul. The older narrative, then, runs somewhat as follows: In search of stray asses, a young man named Saul, of mighty stature, happened to reach a spot where a sacred festival was being conducted by Samuel the seer, who was divinely led to recognize in Saul the future king of Israel. Samuel anointed him and urged him to seize any opportunity that came his way to serve his country's cause. That opportunity soon came in the form of a request from the city of Jabesh in Gilead to be delivered from the terror of the barbarous Ammonites. At once Saul rose to the occasion, defeated the Ammonites, and was proclaimed king. He then turned his attention from the enemy on the east to the enemy on the west, and inflicted some crushing, though not decisive, blows upon the Philistines. These wars revealed to Saul the importance of a regularly organized army, the nucleus of which he created in the form of a permanent body-guard. But there was a darker side to all this success. He was afflicted with a mental malady, and the effort to heal the distemper only deepened the tragedy which had begun.

For the minstrel who was brought to the court to soothe the king's troubled spirit happened to be a man of versatile genius and of altogether extraordinary charm, besides being also a brilliant warrior. The suspicious Saul speedily detected in him a possible rival, and repeatedly sought by cruel cunning to put him out of the way, so that David was at length compelled to flee for his life. Believing that the priests of Nob were in league with David, Saul had them all put to the sword, only one escaping. Saul devotes what time he can spare from his attacks on the Philistines to the persecution of David, who finally takes the bold step of seeking protection at the court of Achish, one of the Philistine lords. Before the fateful battle of Gilboa, the Philistines, not unnaturally doubting the fidelity of David to their cause, had him sent back to the south country. The battle itself is not described in this source, but an Amalekite claims to have slain Saul with his own hand.

The tenor of the later story is as follows: The elders of Israel, vexed by the corrupt administration of Samuel's sons, requested him to make them like their neighbours by appointing them a king. Samuel, regarding the request as implicit apostasy from Jehovah, is greatly distressed, and he paints the inevitable evils of monarchy in Israel in very lurid colours. But, as the people are insistent, he summons an assembly, and by the sacred lot Saul is discovered and made king. But soon Samuel's forebodings receive painful corroboration. In the sacred war against Amalek, Saul, by sparing Agag and the best of the cattle, had disobeyed the direct injunction of the prophet, and broken the ancient law of the ban (cf. Deut. vii. 2, xx. 17; Josh. vi. 21). So for his disobedience Samuel solemnly pronounced his rejection from the kingdom by the God whose word he had rejected; with his

own hand he slew Agag, and Saul and Samuel never met again. The narrative then records the anointing of David, and his victory over Goliath. Stung with jealousy, Saul sought to have David removed by assassination, and when his suggestions were frustrated by the affection of Jonathan, he did not scruple on a later occasion to hurl a spear at him with his own hand. David betook him to the Philistine Achish, and, as prudence compelled him soon to leave the Philistine court, his life was again sought by Saul. On the death of Samuel, the Philistines mustered their hosts, and Saul, unable to ascertain the will of God through any of the legitimate agencies, turned to a witch with the request that she might use her art to conjure Samuel up from the world of shades. When he rose, however, his word for Saul was one of doom, defeat, and death. The next day the doom was fulfilled. Israel was defeated on the heights of Gilboa, and Saul lay dead on the field, slain by his own hand.

It is quite plain that these two narratives are written from different points of view. The former is, on the whole, a straightforward account of the facts; the latter suggests, and even obtrudes throughout, a religious interpretation of the facts, and is therefore of less value for the purpose of the historian, whose primary concern is with the facts themselves. The conception of the kingdom, for example, as an apostasy from Jehovah, seems to reflect the attitude of a later age which had behind it long years of bitter and disillusioning experience; and the religious motive, so prominent here, dominates the narrative throughout. It is particularly prominent in the story of Saul's war with the Amalekites, which in this narrative is the turning-point of Saul's career. It is commonly conceded that this narrative is late, perhaps as late as the time of Hosea, and, on that account, it has sometimes

been denied all historical value; but such a wholesale condemnation of it is surely out of place. It alone contains the story of the war with Amalek, which, though probably late in its present form, is undoubtedly, in the central facts, authentic. Again, though the words that Samuel is represented as uttering on the eve of the battle of Gilboa probably betray the standpoint of the later narrator, the story of the interview with the witch of Endor has all the marks of an early time. Therefore Kittel seems justified in saying that "our duty is rather to make a cautious use of both these documents, endeavouring to determine by internal evidence what the real facts probably were." [1]

On the other hand, it is only just to remember that the second narrative is distinctly favourable to David and distinctly unfavourable to Saul. It is that narrative which contains the romantic stories of David's anointing and of his combat with Goliath; while it is also that narrative which insists again and again on the divine rejection of Saul. Here, in fact, we can trace the beginnings of the spirit which culminated in the Chronicler, whose glorified and sacerdotal David bears but a very faint resemblance to the versatile outlaw of the earlier histories, and whose Saul receives too pathetically scant a justice; for, in flat contradiction to the earlier statement that Saul inquired of Jehovah on the eve of the battle (1 Sam. xxviii. 6), the Chronicler assures us that he did not inquire (1 Chron. x. 14). A true estimate of Saul's character is therefore beset by difficulties, arising partly out of the necessarily meagre recital and the possible suppression of important incidents; partly out of the fact that one of his biographers is late and not impartial. Even the older narrative is full of religious phraseology, according to the manner of the times. What is meant, for example, by such

[1] *History of the Hebrews*, vol. ii. p. 112, n. 1.

a phrase as "an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled" Saul (xvi. 14)? It is the task of the historian to pierce behind such phraseology to the fact of which it is in reality an interpretation.

Undoubtedly the later and theological narrative has done more to determine the popular estimate of Saul than the earlier and more secular narrative. He was dwarfed in his lifetime, and has been dwarfed ever since, by his greater and more successful rival. Even a more brilliant and capable man than Saul might well have appeared inferior to David. But it is quite certain that Saul must have had many qualities not only splendid but substantial. and Samuel's initial choice of him was largely justified by the native worth of the man himself. For one thing, he must have been a man capable himself of great devotion and of inspiring devotion in others. This is attested by the elegy of David, which speaks as eloquently for the charm of Saul as for the magnanimity of David (cf. also xvi. 21); and it is attested almost more strikingly by the devotion of the men of Jabesh Gilead, who risked their lives to save his dead body from indignity. His relations with his servant are of the friendliest possible kind (chap. ix.), and he shows a tender regard for his father in determining to return home at once, so as to relieve him of all anxiety as to his fate.

But these more gracious qualities were wedded to much strength of character. In spite of much that has been said to the contrary, he must have been a man of great capacity, quick to see and seize an opportunity. When the despairing request of the men of Jabesh reached Gibeah, Saul took in the situation at a glance, dealt his blow swiftly, and won by it the popular confidence which placed him on the throne. Again, in spite of the turbulence of the times, and the comparative insignificance of Saul's own tribe, he succeeded in

consolidating his kingdom more or less effectively, not only west, but also east of the Jordan (2 Sam. ii. 8 ff.). His bravery, of course, is beyond all question, and was never more conspicuous than on that last day when he went forth to battle in the firm belief that his efforts would not be sustained by the national god.

Again, he was a profoundly religious man, according to the religious ideas and practices of those days. To this the incidents described in the fourteenth chapter offer eloquent testimony. Perhaps too much stress should not be laid upon his consultation of the oracle,[1] when the Philistines were overtaken by a panic, especially as he advances to action before an answer is received (the will of God being sufficiently plain in the confusion of the Philistine camp). But the curse which he imposed on any who ate food before sunset on the day of the battle is very significant. The object of this was no doubt to retain the favour of Jehovah, as the divinity was supposed to be gratified or placated by the fasting of his worshippers. As a practical soldier, Saul must have known very well the risk of failure he was running in thus impairing the physical vigour of his troops ; and Jonathan bluntly expresses what was no doubt the popular opinion when he says that his father, by the oath, had brought disaster on the land. Immediately afterward the extreme scrupulousness of Saul comes out in his horror when he discovers that the blood, which should belong to Jehovah, had been eaten along with the flesh of the captured animals, and in the instant he makes provision to give Jehovah his due. He further listens to the

[1] Instead of the Hebrew text (1 Sam. xiv. 18), "Bring hither the ark of God," the Greek should be followed, which no doubt contains the original reading : "Bring hither the *ephod* : for he carried the ephod that day before Israel."

suggestion of the priest that the oracle be consulted before renewing the attack, and he is greatly distressed when there is no response—so distressed that he sets himself at once, by the use of the lot, to discover the culprit, and is prepared to have him put to death, even supposing the culprit should turn out to be his son, or even himself (on one not improbable emendation of the text). This is not like the headstrong, impetuous man we have sometimes imagined Saul to be. He wished to make sure of the presence of the national god at all costs; indeed, he has almost a morbid fear of failing in his duty towards him. It is no answer to say that he merely showed the customary scruple of antiquity, for his own son, Jonathan, does not share that scruple. Religion was a stern reality to this man; and it cannot fairly be said that his religion was altogether a matter of externals. In this connection we have to remember his stern efforts to suppress witchcraft and necromancy—no doubt an authentic touch—and this again points in the direction of a worthy conception of the God of Israel. The merit of this measure would be none the less, even if it were performed at the instigation of Samuel rather than on his own initiative. He is anxious and unhappy except when he sustains friendly relations with the unseen. Even the later narrative implicitly represents him as seeking to ascertain the will of Jehovah by dream, Urim, and prophets. It is also worthy of note that in one important respect Saul's moral life was conspicuously honourable for those days—he is recorded to have had only one wife (1 Sam. xiv. 50) and one concubine (2 Sam. xxi. 11)—in this contrasting very favourably with his more brilliant successor (cf. 2 Sam. iii. 2–5).

Saul was without doubt a man of character and ability, and had at least some of the elements of greatness; yet there was a tragedy somewhere. Where

was it? What was it? Two explanations are offered: one—to which we have already alluded—his disobedience to the prophetic word in connection with the war with Amalek; another, in xiii. 8–15*a*, according to which he had not kept the commandment of Jehovah (xiii. 13). The latter explanation, at any rate, is inadequate, as Saul had kept the only commandment recorded (cf. x. 8, xiii. 8). Under very trying circumstances, when the exigencies of the military situation coupled with the impatience and threatened dissolution of his army demanded immediate action, he waited the seven days appointed by Samuel before offering sacrifice himself. Nor can the crime have lain in the sacrifice being offered by Saul himself; for in those days there was nothing illegal in such conduct on the part of a layman, and, had that been the author's conception, he would doubtless have made it plain. Even the first explanation does not adequately account for the subsequent tragedy of Saul's life. The bare fact that two explanations are offered leads to the suspicion that neither represents the whole truth; but it shows how keen was the feeling that there was something in the career of Saul, and in his ultimate failure, or "rejection" (to use the theological language of the book), which needed explanation. Further, both narratives agree in regarding the ἁμαρτία in Saul's character as a religious one.

Where, then, did the tragedy begin? Was it a tragedy of incident, or was it not rather a tragedy of temper? Was it a predisposition to melancholy? Was it a felt incapacity to fill the great position which Providence had thrust upon him? Was it a lack of self-restraint, an impatience of control? Was it the loss of the friendship of Samuel, and the consequent distrust of his own initiative, and despair of the divine support of which the presence of Samuel was the pledge?

Was it jealousy of David? Was it any or all of these things?

Let us go back and gather up such hints as throw light on the riddle of this man's character and destiny. The first significant hint occurs in the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" This proverb—well authenticated, as it is set in two different contexts—has been very variously explained by the commentators; but this at least is plain, that Saul's presence among the prophets was a surprise. Now, when we remember the ecstatic demeanour of the early prophets, and recall the fact that prophecy and raving are occasionally synonymous terms, the proverb at once throws welcome light upon the character of Saul. It suggests that he was of a somewhat impassive, stolid, moody nature, not spontaneous and vivacious, but rather given to brooding and introspection, and therefore the last man whom one would expect to see identified with an excited and noisy band of prophets (x. 5). This inference seems to be further borne out by the fact that in both narratives (unless in this respect the later narrative simply borrows from the earlier) objection is taken by some to Saul's elevation to the throne. "Shall Saul reign over us?" (xi. 12), and still more contemptuously, "How shall this man save us?" (x. 27). Saul must have seemed, to some at least, unfit for such a station, in spite of his kingly presence, his commanding stature, and his military success. When we remember the qualities necessary in a king of those days—spontaneity, initiative, rapidity of action—we are confirmed in our view of Saul as one who impressed strangers as phlegmatic and impassive. That, then, was the groundwork of his character. His was in essence a Hamlet nature—a Hamlet whom circumstances developed into an Othello. He was given to meditation, which would on occasion easily merge into melancholy and suspicion.

But note what happens the moment Samuel brings the idea of the kingdom within the circle of his thoughts. As the narrative says, " God changed his heart " (x. 9) ; his heart was changed. It was just some such master-thought or ambition, if you like, as this, that was needed to stir up the phlegmatic giant into action and passion. It is a mistake to suppose that he was by nature an impetuous man, devoid of self-control. The fact that he kept so long the secret of Samuel's announcement to him about the kingdom points not so much to his modesty, as is usually maintained, but rather to an altogether exceptional power of self-control ; and there is other evidence of self-control and magnanimity combined in his refusal to adopt the suggestion of the people and put to death those who had protested against his elevation to the throne (xi. 13). Where he does give the reins to his passion, as in the case of the massacre of the priests of Nob, there are other reasons for his conduct connected with the new issues that had been brought into his life.

The kingdom then was the vitalizing idea in the thought and action of Saul from that moment on. His sluggish life was shaken to its depths, and it began to hasten on with power and enthusiasm toward its great destiny. His was not the vulgar ambition to sit upon a throne, but the noble ambition to realize himself in the divine career which had opened up ; for, called to it as he was by a prophet, the kingdom was to him a God-given mission. He was " stung by the splendour of this sudden thought " into the most manifold and successful enterprise. He defeats the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Amalekites ; and, according to the mechanical ideas of those days, he must have read in his success the divine corroboration of Samuel's words. But the task of Saul was harder than in the freshness of his enthusiasm he had antici-

pated. That his defeat of the Amalekites was not by any means a decisive one is shown by their renewed activity toward the close of his life (1 Sam. chap. xxx.); and again we are informed that there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul (xiv. 52). No doubt the situation would be further complicated by intertribal jealousies. Now, to a religious man of that day such a situation was capable of only one interpretation. Defeat and calamity meant the anger of God. Samuel had sent him on his first great task with the assurance, "God is with thee" (x. 7); here was fairly cogent proof that God was not with him. A less religious man would have been less concerned, and might have continued to prosecute his work with energy and hope; but we have seen how profoundly religious was the nature of Saul, and how persistently eager he was to assure himself of the presence of God. We can imagine what effect military failures abroad and internal troubles at home must have had upon a religious mind, behind whose early enthusiasm there lay a predisposition to introspection and melancholy.

The suspicion which must have been slowly forming in the mind of Saul reached an awful climax in the words addressed to him by Samuel after his failure to execute the ban upon Amalek. It is possible that the breach between the king and the prophet had been growing gradually wider, and that this is only the climax of a series of similar incidents. Saul's enthusiasm may often have urged him along an independent path, different from that which Samuel had prescribed for him; and Samuel may long have feared, before he finally and irrevocably denounced, the rashness of Saul, which in this case at least amounted to impiety. If that be so, it explains the peculiar and awful solemnity of Samuel's words, and the fact that that rupture between prophet and king was final. There can be

no question that the withdrawal of Samuel's presence and friendship must have had a crippling effect on Saul. It was not only that he lost the advantage of his wise and steadying counsel, but what to the religious mind of Saul was much more serious—he lost the bond which bound him to his new life and justified his career. Samuel had called him to the kingdom; if he left him and denounced him—above all, if he was right in leaving and denouncing him—then Saul's position on the throne was an anomaly; his life had lost its *raison d'être*.

Was Samuel right, then? Even Saul must acknowledge that he was. For Samuel had, so to speak, caught Saul red-handed: he had chosen the moment when his sin was indisputable. Whether Samuel's words of rejection were so definite and far-reaching as recorded we need not now discuss; but, whatever they were, they flashed upon Saul the conviction that he had broken one of the fundamental laws of Israel, and therefore of Israel's God. To a naturally gloomy mind such a conviction must have produced instant, even if not permanent, paralysis of religious hope and practical energy. Scrupulously anxious as we have seen him to be, in the main, with regard to things religious, he must have felt, in that awful moment, with the words of Samuel ringing in his ears, as if he had committed the unpardonable sin, and as if there could be no place for effective repentance, though he should seek it carefully with tears. The later historian is no doubt justified in regarding this incident as the crisis of Saul's career; for, though the exigencies of the day would compel Saul from time to time to renew his activity, and call out in him a certain spasmodic energy, the horror of that hour could never be forgotten; it would lie like a black cloud over all the subsequent enterprise of his life. Had he not been so religious, he would probably have been infinitely happier and

considerably more successful. But now the shadows thrown across his mind by his initial predisposition to morbidness are deepened by his sense of abandonment by God, and by Samuel, who was to him the most important earthly representative of God. The feeling rises that he will, in all probability, be forever unable to realize the high purpose of his life. Melancholy is reinforced by remorse; for he cannot but recognize the heinousness of his sin in disobeying, for whatever reason, so well-known and fundamental a law as that of the ban; and he cannot but recognize the justice of Samuel's terrible words. A worthier conception of God might have saved him from this paralysis; but he had no religious genius. He held the conceptions of his time; and held them, to his hurt, with pathetic tenacity. He is what we might call the victim of religious mania. It is not so much that he has lost the kingdom; but he has lost his God, and he has lost his life.

Now we begin to see what is meant by the evil spirit from Jehovah which came upon him. As he broods over his broken life, his melancholy merges into temporary madness, which is so obvious and uncontrollable that his servants notice it, and make friendly suggestions to have it remedied. At this point a new tragedy enters his life in the person of David, whom Saul soon learned to look upon as an angel of darkness disguised as an angel of light. At first the music wrought its desired effect. But soon the poor, crushed mind begins to brood again; and, as David's military exploits are confessedly more brilliant and popular than his own, the suspicion forms that this man is destined to be his rival. Saul, with his unhappy power of introspection, begins now to see more profoundly into the inexorable purpose of Providence. Everything—his malady, his failures, his ruptured friendship with the prophet—

has been making it increasingly clear that his day is past, that his work is done, that he is a "rejected" man; and now it begins to seem very probable that his place will be taken, and his work done, by the clever minstrel who has been brought to the court to soothe him. And the sting, the horror of the situation, lay in this, that David's relations with the court were directly due to the malady which had prostrated Saul, and indeed to the direct invitation of Saul himself (xvi. 19). It might well seem to the unhappy king that he was being pursued by a heartless fate, which had mockingly compelled him to be the chief instrument in his own ruin.

Is it any wonder that such a man, with such a spirit upon him, and such circumstances around him, should have been jealous of David? But it would be the grossest injustice to Saul to regard this as mere vulgar jealousy of an abler man. It is jealousy, of course (xviii. 8, 9); Saul knew very well that David was the superior man. He instinctively and emphatically acknowledged his charm on his very first appearance at court (xvi. 21, 22); and David's superiority to Saul in war had become almost a byword (xviii. 7, xxi. 11). Nevertheless, Saul's jealousy of David was not without its redeeming nobleness; it was the jealousy of a man through whom his own life-work was destined to be ruined. The idea that had haunted Saul's imagination and determined his activity from the moment when Samuel whispered the first promise and raised the first hopes in his heart was the idea of the kingdom—of the kingdom, however, not so much as a privilege, but rather as a duty; not as an honour to be grasped at, but as a task to be worked out. In another sense than that in which Renan uses the words, Saul must have regarded David as an "unscrupulous bandit"—as a man who was destined to rob him of his own life-

work, the supreme and the dearest thing that was his since the day when "his heart was changed." "What can he have more but the kingdom?" (xviii. 8). If he succeeds in taking that, then he takes with it the life of Saul, and that life which began with such enthusiasm and concentrated energy will be forever "cast as rubbish to the void."

That accounts for his relentless persecution of David; that accounts, too, for his ruthless severity toward the priests of Nob; for he suspects their complicity with David, with the man, that is, who seems destined to ruin not so much his ambitions as his very life. In a sense not at all fantastic, we might say that Saul, in his struggle with David, is fighting for his deeper life. He is struggling for self-realization—for an opportunity to realize that self which was born again and sent out upon its royal task, the day he had met the band of prophets coming down from the high-place with psaltery and timbrel. The gloom of his mind, the misfortunes that were gathering about him, the threats of Samuel, had practically convinced him that the opportunity fully to realize himself in the work of establishing the kingdom would never come. But the ability and popularity of David cut off all such prospect absolutely; hence his cunning and desperate efforts to have him removed. There is something very touching in his words to the Ziphites, when they disclose the hiding-place of David (xxiii. 21): "Blessed be ye of Jehovah; for ye have had compassion on me." They show how terribly his soul was shaken. David is his evil destiny, and those deserve the blessing of God who help him to remove it. The fear which Saul entertained of David has something of the superstitious in it (xviii. 15, 29); it is the same sort of uncanny fear as the Egyptians are said to have entertained toward the Israelites, when they saw how they increased (Exod. i. 12). He

feels in the presence of David as if God had not only deserted him, but was working against him. Similarly, he was afraid when he saw the Philistines before Gilboa, and his heart trembled greatly (xxviii. 5). Why? He may, indeed, have been by this time a nervous wreck, and consequently unwilling to face the horrors and perils of battle. But, on the whole, that is not the most probable explanation; he was too brave and seasoned a warrior to fear for his life. The grounds of his terror lie far deeper. He suspects that now the end of his life-work is come, and that the agonized prayer of his life, "Establish Thou the work of my hands," will remain forever unanswered.

Then, in desperation, he seeks to ascertain the will of Jehovah; for though he has the best of reasons for believing that God has deserted him, he cannot do without God. The old religious nature of the man asserts itself: "I am sore distressed; God is departed from me" (xxviii. 15). Whether these be his actual words or not, they undoubtedly represent his mood. He calls for his old friend, Samuel, the man of God whose words had started him on the career which was now ending so sadly; and when he hears the words of doom, "He fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid" (xxviii. 20). This is the description of a man who is labouring under the most intense emotion. He was sore afraid, not only at the prospect of defeat in the coming battle, but also at the contemplation of his shattered and defeated life. All day and all night, we are told, he had eaten no bread. This statement gives us a glimpse into the gloomy and abstracted thoughts of the unhappy king; and forth he went, with sullen bravery, to his doom, with night in his heart as black as the night through which he walked, forsaken, as he supposed, by the God whose presence he had, on all but one tragic

occasion (so far as we know), sought to secure with scrupulous piety, and discouraged by the prophet who had turned him from the simple country life where he might have been not altogether unhappy, to ascend the slippery steps of a throne.

There is some truth in the contention that Saul was not a man of the very highest capacity. He was, before all things, a soldier, and he lacked that versatility which is necessary to the highest kinds of success in public life. The mental distemper with which he was afflicted, and which must often and painfully have interrupted his energy, was a fatal barrier to the highest form of achievement. But it must not be forgotten that this distemper was not due to jealousy of David. Jealousy aggravated it, but certainly did not create it; it was there from the beginning, a perpetual hindrance to all high endeavour, and no doubt it accounts for much in the pathetic career of the king. But the most fatal element in his character was his superstition. From the ancient point of view this is no doubt a misnomer; but the intensely religious nature of the man, encompassed as he was by difficulty and failure, and preyed upon by morbid thoughts, had all the crippling effects of a superstitious fatalism. Had he been able to shake off the conviction of his "rejection," he might have done even more than he did—and he did not a little—to give Israel her place as a nation among the nations of the East.

V

HISTORY AND HOMILETICS: A STUDY IN THE CHARACTER OF DAVID (2 Sam. xxi. 1–14) [1]

There are two approaches to the Bible—the historical and the homiletic. The historian, as historian, is interested in fact, not in edification, except in the broad sense in which all historical fact may be said to edify: the preacher, on the other hand, is interested in edification rather than in fact. An admirable history of Israel might be written by a scholar who could not preach at all, just as an edifying and, in its own way, effective sermon might be delivered from a historical passage by a preacher who had made no careful critical examination of the facts upon which he rests his exposition and appeals. But an ideal treatment of a Biblical narrative demands scrupulous attention to history and edification alike: neither the merely historical nor the merely homiletic can ever be adequate.

For the Bible is, above all things, *religious* literature; this is as true of the historical books—alike of the Old Testament and the New—as it is of the prophetic books or the epistles. Facts are never recorded merely for what they are, but for what they signify: they are related not simply or chiefly to instruct and inform, but to inspire, to warn, to present and justify the ways of God to men, to kindle faith in the divine control of history, to illumine the path of duty for men and nations, to teach that fear of the Lord which is the

[1] From *The Expositor*.

beginning and the essence of wisdom, to furnish the man of God completely unto every good work. The moral and religious purpose which controls, for example the Book of Proverbs, and is deliberately expressed in its elaborate preface, controls, if not so obviously, yet no less surely, the selection and presentation of the facts recorded in the historical books of the Bible. The men who wrote them wrote as preachers or evangelists rather than as historians. Of Israel's conquest of Canaan the psalmist can say :

> "We have heard with our ears, O God,
> Our fathers have told us,
> *What work Thou didst* in their days,
> In the days of old."
>
> (Ps. xliv. 1.)

And this is the consistent attitude of the historians no less than of the poets.

Considered simply as history, many of the narratives are almost ludicrously meagre. Two of the longest and most important reigns in Israel and Judah, covering over forty years, are dismissed in fourteen verses (2 Kings xiv. 23—xv. 7)—verses, too, which are largely expressed in schematic language, and which would leave us in exasperating ignorance of those reigns, were it not that we are able to fill in their outlines from the vivid pages of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. The truth is that the editors are not, in the strict sense, historians at all : they are preachers, pleading for God with their readers as the prophets with their hearers, pleading through the vehicle of history as they through the vehicle of oratory, and sublimely indifferent to all facts which they conceive to be irrelevant to that plea. It is, of course, legitimate and indeed necessary for a modern historian of Israel to pierce beneath this religious presentation of the history to the ultimate historical facts, so far as he

can discover or recover them by the critical and other means at his disposal; but an adequate treatment of a historical section by a commentator is impossible unless he takes into serious account the fact that what he is dealing with is a *religious* presentation of history, and unless he as faithfully endeavours to set forth the religion which inspires it as the history which underlies it. It is at this point that most commentators fail.

But an equal obligation lies upon the preacher to understand the history from which he professes to draw his moral, and it is at this point that most preachers fail. From the very nature of his calling, which exposes him to the almost irresistible temptation to leap at an obvious moral, the preacher tends to develop the homiletic mind at the expense of his historical conscience. He is professionally more interested in religious edification than in historical truth, and he has seldom the inclination, even if he has the time, to subject a promising narrative to a severely critical examination. He may even have had the mortifying experience of seeing a brave sermon, of which he was about to deliver his soul, wither at the touch of strict exegesis. In any case he may feel that this quest is not for him and that he may, with a good conscience, confine himself to the moral of his story, without too strictly considering its historical truth or implications. And he may do this the more readily as there is plenty of Biblical warrant for such an attitude. The Chronicler is the supreme illustration of the tendency to prefer edification to fact, or even to secure edification at the expense of fact. He frequently treats the statements which he finds in his sources with naïve and sovereign freedom, modifying and transforming them to suit the moral which he makes it his business to point, and creating, by these

modifications and transformations, a much simpler and smoother conception of the divine government of the world than is yielded by the stubborn facts themselves. But the preacher who adopts this facile method pays a double penalty: he loses that vivid conception of the facts and forces of the old Hebrew world by which alone it can become truly intelligible, interesting, and significant to the modern man, and he misses the intellectual and spiritual stimulus which a genuine contact with fact is supremely fitted to convey. The preacher has nothing to lose and much to gain from the careful and critical study of a historical narrative. When this preliminary work is done, he breathes an atmosphere of reality, and he moves with confidence from point to point of his exposition, because there is firm ground beneath his feet. The historical and the homiletic are not strictly separable. The preacher's first business is to try to understand what happened: then, and not till then, is he fully equipped to do justice to the religious implications of the story. His task at this point may take one of two forms: either he may set forth the moral and religious truths which the narrative directly suggests to his own mind, or—and this is a peculiarly fruitful exercise—he may seek to penetrate the mind of the narrator and to recapture the religious ideas which were precious to him and which made him write just so and not otherwise. In this spiritual quest we attain to a genuine communion of souls.

As an illustration of this twofold interest of Biblical narrative, the historical and the homiletic, let us consider the story in 2 Sam. xxi. 1–14 of the extermination of Saul's descendants in accordance with the demand of the oracle which had been consulted to explain the cause of a famine that had visited the

land for three successive years. It is worthy of note, to begin with, that this story was originally suppressed. It occurs in a section of curiously heterogeneous contents (2 Sam. xxi.–xxiv.), which manifestly interrupts the narrative of David's later years: the real sequel of 2 Samuel xx. is 2 Kings i. f. The interpolated section, which is of great interest, contains two poems, lists of David's mighty men, with some account of their exploits—in particular the beautiful tale that gathers round the water of the well of Bethlehem—and two longer narratives, that under consideration (xxi. 1–14), and the other, which closes the book, dealing with David's census of the people and its tragic result (or, historically considered, rather its sequel) in a pestilence which destroyed thousands of the people (xxiv.). Much of this material is historically valuable and unquestionably ancient. It is to this section, for example, that we owe the important information, so significantly modified by the Chronicler (1 Chron. xx. 5), that Goliath was slain, not, as the picturesque later midrash affirms (1 Sam. xvii.) by David, but by another person altogether, Elhanan (2 Sam. xxi. 19). The two longer narratives in chapters xxi. and xxiv., which illustrate in their ancient way the melancholy but indubitable truth that peoples have to pay a bitter price for the mistakes and crimes of their rulers, furnish a vivid glimpse into the world of ancient religious ideas, and are, especially chap. xxi., of great historical value; even chap. xxiv., where the hand of the "religious" historian is more in evidence, contains the valuable notice of David's census and the pestilence. It is fortunate that all this material has been preserved, though put together in this interpolated section in such heterogeneous fashion. But the question remains: why was it originally omitted or suppressed?

Each element of the section has to be examined on its own merits. Conceivably, for example, the psalm of David (chap. xxii.), which is duplicated with slight variations in Psalm xviii., was not in existence when the first edition of the book was published: in other words, if that poem, as some scholars believe, is, at least in its present form, post-exilic, it was *added* by the later editor, and words like suppression or omission are beside the mark. But there is every reason to believe that the narratives at least represent ancient material, and therefore were in all probability familiar to, and accessible to, the earlier editor of the book. The story, told as early as 2 Sam. ix., of David's desire to show kindness to any surviving member of the family of Saul: the question, "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" with the answer that Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, still survives, implying that he is the only survivor; these things put it beyond all doubt that the destruction of Saul's other descendants has already been consummated, and that chap. xxi. chronologically precedes chap. ix. In that case it is as good as certain that chap. xxi. has been deliberately suppressed by the earlier editor of the book.

What significance can be attached to this fact? Was there something in the story from which, with his mature and sensitive mind, he instinctively recoiled —something affecting either the character of David or the temper of primitive Hebrew religion? When we remember that the completed book, even in its earliest form, was, like Judges and Kings, shaped under Deuteronomic influences and therefore hardly earlier than the sixth century B.C., it becomes possible to suppose that the editor's moral sense was offended by the summary execution of seven innocent men

in expiation of the offence of one guilty man. This was in direct contravention of the law of Deuteronomy (xxiv. 16) that "the children shall not be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Ezekiel (xviii. and xxxiii.) very vigorously emphasized this principle of individual retribution —"the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die" (xviii. 4); and the effect of the recognition of this principle is seen in the modification of early stories, such as that of Achan, where the penalty, which, according to ancient law, fell not only upon him, but upon his family (Josh. vii. 15, 24, 25*b*), is limited by *v.* 25*a* to the offender himself: the later conscience was manifestly offended by the flagrant injustice of the earlier law. But this great ethical advance did not succeed in entirely defeating or extruding the older conception: side by side with it there persisted to the latest times the idea of the family rather than the individual as the real unit, and therefore the legitimate object of retribution for the offence of one of its members. The books of Daniel and Esther, which probably both belong to the second century B.C., and are perhaps the very latest in the Old Testament, attest the tenacity of this idea. Not only the accusers of Daniel, but their wives and children as well, are thrown into the lions' den (Dan. vi. 24); and not only is Haman hanged upon the gallows, but his ten sons are slain as well (Esth. ix. 10, 13, 14; cf. John ix. 2). The long persistence of this primitive belief side by side with the more generous one renders it, on the whole, improbable that the editor discarded the story of the destruction of Saul's descendants because he was ashamed of it, as in conflict with a higher and humaner law. Apparently we must seek the cause of its suppression elsewhere.

May we look for it in the historian's desire to relieve

the character of David of an odious blemish? This method of dealing with awkward facts was certainly not unknown to ancient historians. In this department the Chronicler's treatment of David is a masterpiece: the king's adultery with Bathsheba and his cruel and cunning plot for the removal of Uriah are passed over in significant silence. The priestly writer's accounts of the patriarchs are also governed by the same tendency to ignore the inconvenient and to display, with the minimum of tarnish, the great fathers of the past. In his narrative, for example, Jacob, when he leaves home, is not fleeing from the vengeance of the brother whom he has deceived, but has been sent by Isaac to take a wife of his own kinsfolk (Gen. xxviii. 1 f.). Considering this practice, therefore, of later historians, there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the view that the story in question was originally suppressed because of the lurid light it cast upon the conduct of David. Towards the end of the monarchy, if not indeed earlier, David had begun to be idealized, and tales which militated against this idealization could, it might be argued, be not unfairly eliminated.

This consideration drives us back upon a close examination of the story which fortunately the later editor, for whatever reason, decided to transmit to posterity. It is told with all the economy of Old Testament narrative, and it incidentally raises several questions which we cannot definitely answer, but in the discussion of which we must exercise our historical imagination. "There was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David sought the face of Jehovah." The implication is that the famine is a sign of Jehovah's anger, as frequently in the Old Testament (cf. Amos iv. 6), and that the cause of that anger, if discovered, may be removed. To

discover it, David "sought the face of Jehovah," and not in vain, for "Jehovah said, 'There is blood upon Saul and upon his house, because he slew the Gibeonites.'" An average modern reader, innocent of scientific method and interested only in edification, will probably take this to mean that David consulted his God in prayer and received some divinely communicated answer: but the real meaning of it is, as we see from similar passages (cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 9 f., xxx. 7 f.), that he consulted his God and received an answer *by means of an oracle*, usually an ephod, which was in the custody of the priest.

The question now arises: what oracle did David consult? We are not told; but the answer of the oracle, which is so manifestly interested in avenging the Gibeonites, makes it practically certain that it was the oracle at Gibeon, the modern el-Jib, about five or six miles north-west of Jerusalem. Here there was a famous sanctuary, a sanctuary so famous that it was to it that Solomon resorted at the beginning of his reign to offer sacrifice—"for that was the great high place" (1 Kings iii. 4)—and it was in it that Jehovah appeared to him in a dream, promising him, as the story ran, not only the wisdom for which he had prayed, but riches and honour as well (1 Kings iii. 4–15). Now why did the oracle interpret the famine as it did? Nothing, indeed, was more natural than that it should ascribe the calamity to sin; this was in accordance with the interpretation of suffering which generally prevailed till the writer of Job hurled his titanic protest against it: but the significant point is that the sin to which the Gibeonite oracle traced the famine is a sin *against the Gibeonites themselves*, and it is further significant that the oracle unhesitatingly names Saul as the specific author of the outrage which had brought on the calamity. The answer of the

oracle was apparently, therefore, governed by two motives—to avenge the Gibeonites and to get rid of the descendants of Saul. Who, then, were the people who may conceivably have been animated by these motives? Were the Gibeonites equally influenced by both motives, or, in their answer that Saul is guilty, with the implication that his descendants must be exterminated, are we to look for the influence of another mind? In other words, was the religious motive that determined the oracle's answer governed by political considerations emanating from another quarter?

Professor George A. Barton, in his *Religion of Israel* (p. 82), suggests that the oracle "was manipulated by the Gibeonite priesthood." Certainly that priesthood had reasons of its own, thoroughly satisfactory to the primitive religious mind, for desiring and suggesting the extermination of Saul's descendants. The narrative itself, which one could wish had been much fuller, tells us that Saul "had sought to smite the Gibeonites in his zeal for the children of Israel": he was the man that "consumed us and thought to destroy us that we should not remain in all the border of Israel" (xxi. 2, 5). Unfortunately there is no record of the incident or incidents to which this passage alludes, but it has been acutely suggested that the reference may be, in the first instance, to the massacre of the priests at Nob recorded in 1 Samuel xxii. The late Professor Cheyne, assuming that Gibeon, not Nob,[1] should be read in 1 Samuel xxi. 1 (2), xxii. 9, 11, 19, remarks, "We cannot suppose that the priests of the sanctuary of Gibeon at the time of the massacre were Israelites. They must surely have been Gibeonites, and the fact that the Gibeonite priests aided and abetted David was probably the excuse which Saul urged for decimating the Gibeonite population."[2] If this in-

[1] Cf. *Encycl. Bib.* iii. 3429 f. [2] *Encycl. Bib.* ii. 1717.

genious assumption be correct, there is a certain grim propriety in the execution of Saul's descendants taking place "in Gibeon on the mount of Jehovah," [1] that is, on the very site where, by command of Saul, the priests had been massacred. But whether this be the initial specific offence or not, it is enough that Gibeonites suffered violence at the hands of Saul; and as this was in flagrant contravention of an earlier treaty between Gibeon and Israel recorded in the humorous story of Joshua ix., the Gibeonites had adequate motives of their own, considering the solidarity of the family with the individual, for desiring and demanding the destruction of Saul's descendants, since death had removed Saul himself beyond their reach.

But while we need not travel beyond the Gibeonites in search of an adequate motive for the answer of the oracle, we cannot lightly dismiss from our minds the consideration that the disappearance of Saul's descendants was an immense political convenience to David; and, however reluctantly, historical method compels us to raise the question; is it possible that the oracle was suborned by David? A malicious critic might be inclined to stress the fact that Gibeon was the oracle which David elected to consult. Were there not other sanctuaries with skilled and intelligent priests from whom he might have obtained a competent oracle? But at Gibeon, even without any suggestion on his part, the priests might be trusted to seize the opportunity to wipe out their old score against Saul for his treatment of their people, the more so as such an act would be not only condoned but demanded by the religious mind of the age. It would

[1] So, by the simple change of *b^ehir* into *b^ehar*, reading with LXX (B) Gibeon (cf. *v.* 9), and omitting, with two MSS., Saul; instead of the received reading "in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Jehovah" (*v* 6).

be alike unfair and unworthy, however, to press this point. Gibeon was not far from Jerusalem, and it was, as we have seen, a sanctuary of high importance, honoured later by a visit from the great Solomon himhimself ; and no special suspicion need attach to David from his choice of it on this occasion.

A faint suspicion, however, might not be quite illegitimate if the particular priest who administered the oracle was Abiathar. On other occasions in the Books of Samuel this priest was closely associated with David. After Saul's massacre of the priests, Abiathar flees to David, who requests him to remain with him, and guarantees his protection (1 Sam. xxii. 22 f.). Later he appears beside David "with an ephod"—the instrument for securing the oracle—"in his hand" (xxiii. 6) ; and on two recorded occasions—in reality, probably on far more—David is stated to have consulted him by means of the ephod (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7). The words of Solomon in 1 Kings ii. 26, when he is on the eve of deposing Abiathar in favour of Zadok, attest the long and close intimacy of that priest with David. Now it has to be remembered that Abiathar was the only surviving priest of the massacre at Nob (or Gibeon ?) [1] instigated by Saul and carried out by Doeg (1 Sam. xxii. 20), and that he had therefore the motive of blood-revenge for the extermination of Saul's descendants. If, then, as is not improbable, Abiathar was the priest who administered the oracle at Gibeon, David may have cherished the hope, whether faint or confident, for an answer which would rid him, once and for all, of the chief remaining menace to his political security. It is not really necessary to suppose that the oracle was tampered with, as either Abiathar—if he was the priest—or in any case

[1] The argument lends perhaps some slight confirmation to Cheyne's identification of Nob with Gibeon.

the Gibeonites had satisfactory and adequate motives for interpreting the calamity as they did.

Still we cannot altogether deliver our minds from the impression that the answer of the oracle, pointing so unmistakably to the complete and final removal of every remaining member (except the lame Meribbaal) of his rival's family, agrees too ominously well with David's political necessities. It can hardly be denied that sinister possibilities are present; whether those possibilities are probabilities can only be decided after an impartial consideration of the character of David as a whole. Such an estimate is by no means easy, as of all Old Testament characters, his is surely one of the most varied and complex. This is not the place to attempt such an estimate, but one or two considerations may be pointed out.

The story of David's relations with Bathsheba shows that he did not hesitate to contrive a cruel and treacherous murder in order to secure his personal ends (2 Sam. xi. 15); and that the streak of ferocity which marks the Semitic character was not absent from David is attested by the ruthless treatment of his Moabite prisoners (2 Sam. viii. 2), though doubtless the law of the ban—which demanded that the whole population be "devoted" to destruction—would have more than justified David in the eyes of his contemporaries. Again, when we remember the cruelty and the cunning which characterize Oriental courts, alike in ancient and modern times, we shall not too summarily dismiss the possibility of David's having taken steps to secure his throne by the violent elimination of all who might contest it. The second chapter of 1 Kings throws a flood of lurid light upon the methods by which a new reign might be inaugurated. Solomon began by having his rival Adonijah put to death, and any others whom he considered dangerous, such as Joab,

who had supported Adonijah, and Shimei, who had shown such bitter hostility to David during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. xvi. 5 ff.). The story of these official assassinations concludes with grim simplicity: "and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kings ii. 46); in other words, the foundations of his throne were bathed in blood. Now later generations held the memory of Solomon in hardly less honour than that of David, as the glorious founder of the Temple and the unique embodiment of wisdom; and if such methods could be deliberately adopted by such a man to secure his position and the story of them told without censure, it is still less to be wondered at if David who is first introduced to us as "a mighty man of valour and a man of war" (1 Sam. xvi. 18), a man who had "shed blood abundantly and made great wars, and shed much blood upon the earth" (1 Chron. xxii. 8), and whose position as monarch was in a sense even more precarious than that of Solomon, the hereditary principle not having been yet established—should have adopted equally summary methods to rid himself of his rivals. It is certain that suspicion very early centred upon David for complicity in the destruction of Saul's descendants. The story of Shimei's attitude to David during the rebellion of Absalom—a story which though told earlier, is really later than the one we are considering—furnishes indubitable testimony on this point. Shimei, we read, "came out, and cursed still as he came, and he cast stones at David. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, 'Begone, begone, *thou man of blood*, and base fellow: Jehovah hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned'" (2 Sam. xvi. 5–7). The significance of this fierce hostility lies in the fact that Shimei is "a man of the family of the house of Saul";

and it is hardly possible to evade the conclusion that Shimei is alluding to the murder—albeit executed under the sanction of religion (2 Sam. xxi. 6, 9)—of the descendants of Saul, and that he holds David responsible for that murder. Shimei, at any rate, cherished no delusions as to the source from which the oracle was inspired. He may indeed have been wrong, but this early suspicion of the guilt of David cannot be lightly set aside.

On the other hand, it may be just as vigorously urged that David was a man of peculiarly chivalrous and magnanimous nature. (*a*) This is placed for ever beyond all question by his noble elegy over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i.)—one of the most touching tributes that ever celebrated human worth. Chivalrous indeed must have been the soul of the man who sang so glowing and so splendid a song in honour of the enemy who had hunted him over hill and dale and thirsted for his blood. (*b*) Further proof of David's magnanimity has also been found in the unhesitating readiness with which, against the advice of his friends, he spared the life of Saul when he had him at his mercy. The story is twice told (1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi.), but here, as so often in the Pentateuch, we have almost certainly to do with two versions of the same incident. But whether the thing happened once or twice, the magnanimity of David is held to be proved. Against this, however, it has been urged that David's conduct may have been dictated, at least in part, by motives of policy. It is a curious and perhaps significant fact that twice in each story David emphasizes the sanctity of "Jehovah's anointed." "Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, Jehovah's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is Jehovah's anointed. . . . I will not put forth my hand against my lord, for he is Jehovah's anointed" (xxiv. 6, 10).

"David said to Abishai, 'Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed and be guiltless? . . . Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed'" (xxvi. 9, 11). It may seem ungenerous to ascribe David's refusal to put Saul to death to any other motive than that of his native chivalry; but it is abstractly possible to suppose that so astute a man as David (1 Sam. xvi. 18), who may himself at this time have aspired to the throne, would have regarded the murder of the king as an ugly precedent to establish, and that it served his own purpose well to surround the person of the monarch with a halo of inviolable sacrosanctity. At any rate the magnanimity of this incident is not quite so indubitable as that of the elegy.

(*c*) Another proof of David's native magnanimity has been sought in his treatment of Meribbaal (Mephibosheth). "I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father" (2 Sam. ix. 7). This seems the willing tribute of a generous soul to the memory of his dead and dearly beloved friend. This very generosity, however, is manifestly streaked with suspicion and caution. Notice how significantly the story ends: "He did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame in both his feet" (2 Sam. ix. 13). Each of these clauses has its peculiar point. The man whom David befriended was a cripple, "lame in both his feet," and therefore little likely to take any active part in fomenting rebellion; and even so, he kept him under continual surveillance, by conferring upon him the ambiguous honour of perpetual guest. Probably the suspicion which prompted these precautionary measures was not without justification, for later Meribbaal is accused of taking Absalom's side during the rebellion, in the hope that the dis-

turbance might end by restoring him to his grandfather's throne: "for he thought, To-day will the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father" (2 Sam. xvi. 1–4). True, this may only be a slander of his servant Ziba (2 Sam. xix. 25–30), as it may seem improbable that a cripple should aspire to the throne, especially at a time when the favourite was the fascinating Absalom. On the other hand, the accusation may point in the direction of the truth. In any case, David manifestly suspected him, and the magnanimity which assigned him a place at his table may not be so unadulterated as might at first sight appear.

If David was inspired by fear and jealousy of Saul's family to instigate the violent removal of all its members but one, and to keep that remaining member under perpetual guard, it would bring him curiously into line with Saul, who had been actuated by the very same motives in his relentless pursuit of David over the hills of Judah, and who had sought his life even earlier, when he was still at court. Each stood in the way of the other. David may have seen in Saul's surviving descendants, as Saul had seen in David (1 Sam. xviii. 8),[1] the fatal barrier to complete security upon the throne. But it cannot be absolutely proved that David had any complicity in the destruction of Saul's descendants or that he influenced the oracle which decreed their fate. Shimei's direct charge may be held to confirm the suspicion which, on other grounds, may be supposed to attach to the conduct of the oracle; but he, as a member of Saul's clan, may have been ready to suspect unjustly and without sufficient foundation. He may have sincerely regarded as true what he had only reason to regard as possible or probable. An admirer of David would be thoroughly justified in maintaining that his appeal to the oracle

[1] "What can he have more but the kingdom?" (cf. xx. 31).

was as ingenuous as, on a previous occasion, Saul's own appeal had been. After a battle with the Philistines, Saul, on consulting the oracle with a view to a further advance and receiving no answer, immediately infers that the Deity is angry in consequence of some sin or violation of taboo in his camp (1 Sam. xiv. 36–42), and he at once takes steps—again by means of the oracle, as the Septuagint text of verse 41 makes clear—to discover the offender. The significant words are: "As Jehovah liveth, who saveth Israel, *though it be in Jonathan my son*, he shall surely die" (*v.* 39; cf. *v.* 24). If Saul was willing to accept the decision of the oracle even against his own son, it is not perhaps too much to suppose that David went to the oracle—the natural oracle for him to consult, considering the proved prominence of Gibeon at that time—with an equally open mind, ready to accept its decision whatever it may be, and with no sordid ulterior political design.

The remaining verses of the story (7–14) create no special difficulty.

The foregoing discussion serves to show what an intricate matter true historical study is, and how impossible it sometimes is, with our lamentably meagre evidence, to reach indubitable conclusions on matters of even first-rate historical importance. The preacher may well feel embarrassed, after having done all this preliminary historical work, in dealing with a passage which raises so many unsolved and perhaps insoluble problems. His effort to pierce behind the narrative has only served to give him confusion where before all was, or seemed, simplicity; and his first impulse may be to run away. Or he may content himself by dwelling upon the complex motives that govern the actions of men, even of so royal a soul as David;

or, in his treatment of the later part of the story, he may be both historically instructive and religiously edifying by bringing out the savage quality of primitive religion, whose God could demand the execution of seven innocent men, tracing the gradual purification and enlargement of the idea of God, and contrasting the barbarities of the ancient Hebrew God with the loving Father revealed to us in Jesus Christ. All this would be helpful and far from irrelevant. But another way is to stand back from the passage, after having lived within it, and to look at the great ideas—primitive in form, but palpitating with life—that throbbed in the mind of the man who wrote it.

(i). Of these the first is this—*the need of some interpretation of the world.* A famine occurs and persists; why? The ancient man's answer may not be ours, but it is much to have asked the question. The question can only be asked by one who believes that the world, that a famine, that everything has a meaning. The pathos of life is that so few have the clue. We are like Pharaoh's butler and baker who with sorrowful faces say to Joseph, "We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it" (Gen. xl. 7). The dream of life is hard to interpret; the design of the web of experience—alike of the world and of the individual—is hard to make out. And if the drift and meaning of normal experience is difficult enough to decipher, what of life's abnormal things—its famines, wars, losses, disasters, catastrophes? The deep heart does not accept these things without challenge. It asks why? because it believes in God and that there is in His universe, which would otherwise be intolerable, a purpose and a meaning. We do not always put it thus, but at bottom, that is our mind about it. The ancient man felt this as keenly as we. The priest to whom he took his perplexity

may often have guided him in ways that were foolish and irrelevant enough, but the instinct was sound which led him to the man who was supposed to know the mind of God. For the Christian, Jesus is the great Master-Interpreter, and experience can never again be a hopeless and baffling riddle to one who has the mind of Jesus. But the time for Him was not yet.

It is significant, too, that the interpretation offered by this story is a moral interpretation: the famine is explained by sin. Here the modern man is peculiarly, and to some extent justly, rebellious: he will have nothing to do with a doctrine which connects physical disaster with moral delinquency. Mr Lecky remarks, in his *History of European Morals*, that "there arises in the minds of scientific men a conviction, amounting to absolute moral certainty, that the theological habit of interpreting the catastrophes of nature as Divine warnings or punishments or disciplines, is a base and pernicious superstition"; and Mr Edmund Gosse, in *Father and Son*, speaks of his father as retaining "the singular superstition, amazing in a man of scientific knowledge and long human experience, that all pains and ailments were directly sent by the Lord in chastisement for some definite fault, and not in relation to any physical cause." After all, this refusal to interpret disaster as necessarily and invariably chastisement, is not exclusively modern: it is as old as our Lord (Luke xiii. 1–5; John ix. 2), as old as the Book of Job. Yet in spite of this there persists among thoughtful men the feeling that we are living in a moral universe, to which nothing that happens is unrelated. The answer of the oracle may conceivably have been crossed by base political motives, but it doubtless appealed to the conscience of the time, which instinctively connected

disaster with wrong. Beneath this crude interpretation is hidden the permanent truth that the world of experience demands a moral interpretation.

(ii). Another great truth of the passage is that *the past lives on.* It cannot be escaped : it may be buried, but it cannot die. Sooner or later it rises from its grave and looks us in the face—like Joseph, whom his brethren thought they had done with for ever, but who rises out of the buried years and faces them with the soul-searching words, " I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt " (Gen. xlv. 4). Saul did not know when he was slaughtering the Gibeonites that he was sealing the doom of his own sons and grandsons as well. He had broken a treaty solemnly made by an earlier leader of Israel ; and in a moral world such things cannot pass unpunished. Doubtless here again this great idea is presented in thoroughly primitive fashion, and worked out with a deliberate barbarity which was only possible to an age which treated the family, the clan, or the nation, as the moral unit—which had no real conception of the individual, and consequently of the enormity of making the innocent suffer for the guilty. But the truth behind this primitive practice is of permanent and overwhelming importance. The past is never over, it lives on. The horrors of the last few years have taught us how terrible a thing it is to break a treaty and that sooner or later the price must be paid to the uttermost farthing. A broken treaty may break the world in pieces.

(iii). Last, there is *the wonder of mother-love.* " They were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured upon them from heaven ; and she

suffered neither the birds of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." Nothing can surpass the simple pathos of these words. For a corpse to remain unburied was, to the ancient mind, not only an indignity but a calamity, as the souls of the unburied dead were believed to wander restlessly about; but the horror of such a fate was inconceivably aggravated if the corpse should suffer mutilation, as from a wild beast. The later and humaner law prescribed that even a murderer should be buried on the day of his execution (Deut. xxi. 22 f.). This mitigation of the criminal's fate was refused in the case of Saul's descendants, perhaps, as Gressmann suggests, because the sacrificial ritual in such cases demanded their exposure. However that may be, Rizpah covered herself with imperishable glory by the heroism of affection which kept her at her lonely guard for six long months beside the bodies of her beloved dead. Mother-love is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, and the fierce men who told and listened to such tales knew that love as well as we; but it shines with all the more radiance here against the dark background of the vendetta. If a guilty man could, in the person of his innocent sons and grandsons, be pursued beyond the grave by the sincere but savage conscience of the time; if a priest of God could deliver an oracle which would inevitably send seven innocent men to their doom; if a trail of blood ran over the lives and the minds of Israel's leaders in those distant days: it is a comfort to remember that there was also then a woman whose love was stronger than death.

"If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!"

VI

THE SPIRIT OF EARLY JUDAISM[1]

Contrast of the Post-Exilic with the Pre-Exilic Age

Judaism is still a mighty force in the world to-day, and many of its phases are little more than adumbrated in the literature of the Old Testament. By early Judaism we mean the period of four centuries or so from the sixth century B.C. to the second, beginning with the return from the exile and ending with the Maccabean times—the period whose literary reflex is to be found in the Books of Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah lvi.-lxvi. Ruth, the Priestly part of the Pentateuch, Joel, Jonah, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Psalms and Proverbs in part, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Esther, and certain minor fragments. Is the complex movement represented by this heterogeneous literature governed by a single spirit? What, if any, is the unity amid all this incontestable diversity?

Let us glance for a moment at the overwhelming national experience which preceded this movement and which to so large an extent conditioned its life and literature. The exile broke the history of Israel in two. The terms pre-exilic and post-exilic are more than merely chronological: the types of energy and ideal that lie on one side of the exile are in many essential respects different from those on the other. Of course beneath these conflicting types there is a

[1] From *The Expository Times.*

real unity, as there always is and must be alike in every individual and national development. From the beginning to the end the Hebrew remains a Hebrew, just as the Greek remains a Greek and the Englishman an Englishman. Amid much that is very different, the Maccabean struggles repeat the ancient energies and tempers by which, a millennium before, Israel won her victories over the Canaanites and secured the land upon which her mighty work for the world was to be done: the First Book of the Maccabees irresistibly reminds us of the Book of Judges. Just so is the large humanism of the Greek Anthology already anticipated in Homer; and the great labour struggle of to-day, needlessly vexatious as it may be in some of its aspects, is in direct line with the epoch-making challenge which broke upon our history with Magna Charta. All that is true and incontrovertible: there can be no absolute break in a nation's history. One period fades or rather flows into another, and beneath the diversity of the operations of the ages there is one spirit.

It is equally true, however, that there are great convulsions in national and international experience, such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the great World War, which do not and cannot leave men and nations as they find them. Indeed, this is true of all experience—of the even flow of life as well as of its catastrophic things. The man of seventy is continuous with the boy of seven, yet the subtle interplay of circumstance effects profound and inevitable change. It is a long way not only in time but in thought and in historical and religious experience from the song of Deborah to the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, just as it is a long way from Hesiod to Plotinus and from the Beowulf to Browning.

(i). *Ecclesiasticism*

Now the change which the progress of even peaceful centuries would inevitably have brought over the mind of Israel was immeasurably modified by the catastrophic experience of exile. The most cursory comparison of pre-exilic with post-exilic literature leaves upon our mind the impression that they are the products of altogether different worlds. When we pass from Amos to Malachi we "are like unto them that dream." Ezekiel, of course, is the great reminder that the contrasts which seem so startling and radical to us are not to be too sharply drawn, for he, in his own single person, harmoniously blends the opposition of prophet and priest. He looks before and after—back to the pre-exilic movement which in one sense he summarizes, and forward to the post-exilic movement which he, more than any other, inaugurates: he touches Amos with one hand, and Malachi with the other. It is he who compels us to feel the underlying unity between those strangely diverse periods, he incarnates in himself their seemingly conflicting and incompatible interests. If he is the father of Judaism, he is no less surely the heir of the great prophetic movement: he is the bridge on which we may pass with intelligence from one period to the other.

But even over a bridge we may pass into another land. The spiritual scenery, when we cross by way of Ezekiel, is unlike that which we have left behind. Contrasts abound. In the pre-exilic period, for example, the prophet is in the ascendant, in the post-exilic the priest. There were priests, of course, in abundance before the exile, as there were prophets, a few, after it. The warfare of the pre-exilic prophets is, to a large extent, waged against the distortions of religion

that were supported and encouraged by the priests; and the interest of the post-exilic prophets was by no means confined to ritual and the Temple (cf. Zech. vii. 9 f.; Mal. iii. 5). But it remains broadly true that the dominating figure of the earlier period is the prophet and of the later the priest. We can trace the transition through Deuteronomy, that glorious book which insists with all a prophet's ardour upon a purified national life, and which yet gathers this national reform round a purified ritual within one exclusive place of worship. We can trace it, too, in the change that came over Hebrew historical writing. In JE (the prophetical narrative of the Hexateuch), for example, though the narratives sometimes attach to famous sanctuaries like Bethel, the emphasis is upon the great moral ideas and the inspiring conceptions of God and His purpose, upon which the prophets so unweariedly insist. In the Book of Kings, the spirit is no longer prophetic but prophetico-priestly: Deuteronomy has begun to do its work in shaping the historian's approach to fact. The editors eliminate much that would have been of immense interest and value to us, and treat much of what remains in accordance with a scheme by which they pass judgment on kings, with wearisome iteration, according to their attitude to the high places. But post-exilic historians are interested almost exclusively in ritual: this is the dominating interest alike of P (the priestly narrative of the Hexateuch) and of the Chronicler. The vivid picture of David, for example, drawn by the earlier historians, is so overlaid by the Chronicler's ecclesiastical brush as to be almost ludicrously unrecognizable. Nearly every vestige of political interest in ancient warriors and statesmen has vanished: the hands are the hands of the historian, but the voice is the voice of a Churchman. Nothing now matters but the Church.

This change in the spirit of historical writing is but the reflex of the change that had passed over the people. They had once been a nation, they are now only a Church. As a nation they had never been great in the sense in which Assyria or Egypt was great, except to a certain degree during the reign of David. But size is no measure of a nation's greatness any more than of a man's, and Israel had been great in its political as in its religious soul. Menaced by great empires more or less continuously for four centuries, she had clung throughout it all with desperate tenacity to what independence was possible for her. The stubborn defence of Samaria for three years (724–721 B.C.) and of Jerusalem for a year and a half (588–586) amid unimaginable horrors, shows how fiercely her people valued their political status among the nations of the world. But all this passes with the exile. Her territory for long after the return consisted of little more than the fields and villages for a space of ten or fifteen miles around Jerusalem. She is now a Church—a nation no more.

National life, if so with any propriety it might be called, now gathers round the Temple: the leaders of her religious life are consequently priests. It is at this point that the contrast between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic period is most striking. One wonders what Amos would have thought of Malachi. We think of the immortal challenge, "Was it sacrifices and offerings that you brought Me in the wilderness, O house of Israel? (Nay, verily; but now, as then) let justice roll on as water, and righteousness like a perennial stream" (Amos v. 25, 24); and we ask ourselves what fellowship the man who hurled such a challenge could have had with the man who urged that God demanded these very sacrifices and offerings, and that to withhold them was robbery which brought

down His curse. "You rob Me in the matter of tithes and offerings, you are cursed with the curse, for you rob Me" (Mal. iii. 8 f.). To the one the power of God depended on hating the morally evil, and loving the morally good (Amos v. 14 f.), to the other it depended upon bringing the whole tithes into the treasury (Mal. iii. 10). A greater contrast it would be scarcely possible to imagine, yet it is broadly typical of the pervasive contrast between pre-exilic and post-exilic prophecy. It is not merely that in the later day the priest is the dominant religious figure, but that the prophet, when he does appear, speaks with the accent of the priest. The God of Amos says, "I hate, I despise your feasts" (v. 21), the God of Hosea demands mercy, *not sacrifice* (vi. 6); but the interest of Haggai and Zechariah gathers upon the Temple, and of Malachi upon its worship.

(ii). *Scepticism*

Another distinguishing feature of the post-exilic age in contrast with the pre-exilic is its note of intellectual challenge. Scepticism there was before the exile, but it is only feebly and intermittently vocal and never long sustained (cf. 2 Sam. iii. 33; Jer. xii. 1 f.; Hab. i. 13 ff.). There is nothing like a deliberate and reasoned challenge of the ways of God with men. But during or just before the exile the note begins to be distinctly heard—at first only in the form of a popular proverb (Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2), but a proverb which crystallizes reflection on the experience of at least two generations and expresses a cynical view of history, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, but it is the children's teeth that are set on edge." The exiles to whom Ezekiel ministers bluntly express their doubt or denial of God's justice. "The way

of the Lord is inequitable" (xviii. 25, 29, xxxiii. 17), they say, and Ezekiel with equal bluntness has to remind them that it is not the Lord's ways but their own that are inequitable (xviii. 29). By the time of Malachi, however, a century and a quarter later, scepticism is in full blast. Short as that book is, it unmistakably reveals an atmosphere of discussion and challenge even among the circles of the pious. A protest from his audience runs throughout the book. Whatever he says is immediately disputed—"but ye say." The book opens on a note of challenge. "I have loved you, saith Jehovah. *But ye say*, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" (i. 2). And so again and again. "*But ye say*, Wherefore?" (ii. 14). "Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. *But ye say*, Wherein have we wearied Him?" (ii. 17). "Return unto Me. *But ye say*, Wherein shall we return?" (iii. 7). "Ye rob Me. *But ye say*, Wherein have we robbed Thee?" (iii. 8). It is not without justice that Malachi levels at them the charge, "Your words have been stout against Me, saith Jehovah" (iii. 13), though they are hardly conscious of the gravity of their challenge and of the essential scepticism of their temper—"*But ye say*, What have we spoken against Thee?" The men whom Malachi addresses are disappointed, embittered, and angry at God's conduct of the world's affairs. "Where is the God of justice?" they ask ii. 17). They are not afraid to deny in words half sorrowful, half bitter, that there is a moral order at all; the world is turned upside down. All that they can see through their tears is a definitely immoral order. They say, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and He delighteth in them" (ii. 17). "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of Hosts? And we" are

EVANGELIC... SCHOOL OF THE...

constrained by the logic of fact to "call the proud happy; yes, it is those that work wickedness that are built up, those who thus test God that escape" (iii. 15). The interesting point is that these are not the words of wicked men: it is "those who feared Jehovah that spoke thus with one another" (iii. 16); and the prophet has to console them by assuring them that God is writing their names in a book which will keep Him in mind, in the great day, of their fidelity.

It was only natural that the gloomy experiences of the three or four centuries that succeeded the exile should confirm the sceptical temper of men who faced the facts and refused to be comforted either by illusory hopes for which they could see no foundation, or by such a faith as that of the Chronicler who seemed equally able to ignore the facts of the present and to adapt to his own rigid scheme the inconvenient facts of the past. To this temper immortal expression has been given by the incomparable writer of the Book of Job. Sometimes it flashes out in a simple passionate challenge:

> "He destroyeth both guiltless and guilty.
> When the scourge bringeth sudden death,
> The despair of the blameless He mocketh.
> He hath given up the earth to the wicked;
> He veileth the face of its judges.
> If it be not He, who then?" (Job ix. 22–24).

Sometimes it utters itself in a wail over the unutterable misery in which all human life is enveloped:

> "Hath man on the earth not a warfare,
> With days like the days of a hireling?" (vii. 1).
> "Man that is born of a woman
> Is of few days and full of trouble" (xiv. 1).

But at other times it launches forth in a protest, as sustained as it is fierce, against the whole order of

the world. Never has a more furious challenge been hurled against it than in the bitterly eloquent words beginning with—

> "Why are wicked men suffered to live,
> To grow old and wax mighty in power?" (xxi. 7).

and ending with the wonderful lines:

> "One dies with his strength unimpaired,
> In the hey-day of ease and prosperity;
> Filled are his buckets with milk;
> His bones at the marrow are moistened.
> And one dies with soul embittered,
> With never a taste of good.
> In the dust they lie down together;
> The worm covers them both" (xxi. 23–26).[1]

Job is not here simply lamenting that the bad prosper while the good suffer; that would be at least an order, albeit an immoral order. He is saying something far more terrible than that. He is saying that not only is there no moral order, there is not even a definitely immoral order; anything may happen to anybody. There is simply no order at all. It is easy to see in all this the reflex not only of a sorrowful individual experience, but of the general sorrow and confusion of the times in which the unhappy writer lived.

The same challenge we hear later, but without its thrill of moral passion, from the writer of Ecclesiastes. He, too, maintains alternately, like the writer of Job, that the order of the world is immoral, and that there is no order at all. The good fare badly and the bad fare well; and, a few verses further on, all fare alike—at least in the end. "Here is another of the anomalies to be found upon the earth—honest men who fare as if they had been scoundrels, and scoundrels

[1] I quote from my translation in *The Wisdom Books in Modern Speech*, p. 51 (Jas. Clarke & Co.).

who fare as if they had been honest men" (Eccles. viii. 14). "The fate of all is alike—of saint and scoundrel, good and bad, pure and impure, those who do and those who do not practise sacrifice. Saint and sinner fare alike, those who take oaths and those who are afraid to take them" (ix. 2).[1] A fragment, fortunately preserved, of another baffled thinker, helps us to feel how widespread and how paralyzing was the sense of inability to solve the weary world-problem:

"I have wearied myself, O God,
O God, I am wearied and spent;
For dull as a brute am I,
Not a man with the mind of a man.
I have not learned wisdom,
And nothing I know of the Holy One.
Who hath climbed the heavens and come down?
Who hath gathered the wind in His fist?
Who hath tied in a garment the waters,
Or set up the bounds of the earth?
What is His name, or His son's name?
For surely thou knowest" (Prov. xxx. 1–4).[2]

There is nothing that in the least resembles these elaborate sceptical challenges in pre-exilic literature. They are the thoughts of disillusioned members of a sorrow-stricken age, an age of books and meditation which have brought no comfort, or light, or healing.

"Books are so many, their making is endless,
And study protracted but wearies the flesh" (Ecc. xii. 12).

Contrasts within the Post-Exilic Age

We have dealt with the contrast between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic age: now let us look at the contrasts which abound within the post-exilic age itself. For though it is common to suppose that the

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 185. [2] *Loc. cit.* p. 160.

heavy hand of the priest lay upon its life, in point of fact its literature exhibits a refreshing variety of opinion and attitude. No wooden orthodoxy holds the field unchallenged. Whether the liberal thinkers were welcomed by the leaders of the Church or not, they certainly claimed and heroically asserted their right to freedom of thought, and it is to the credit of the later Church that she accepted within her canon of Holy Scripture—though clearly sometimes with modifications which blunted the edge of their heresy—books like Job, which contained utterances, or like Ecclesiastes, which were pervaded by a spirit that challenged, where it did not deny, much that was dear to the orthodox heart. What could the original genius who gave us the Book of Job have thought, for example, of the pious Chronicler? With what horror would the Chronicler have read the daring and to him impious challenges of Job, or studied the cold-blooded scepticism and pessimism of Ecclesiastes! Probably the fact that Ecclesiastes found a place in the canon at all is a testimony to its popularity: it represented a mood which all the pieties of the orthodox Church could do nothing to dissipate, and had simply to accept, correcting it, as best it could, by gentle touches here and there.

(i). *Attitude to the World-Order*

These daring thinkers may have been in part provoked into their heresies by the kind of faith which they saw to animate some of the men who determined the opinions and controlled the fortunes of the Church—a faith which must have seemed to them lacking in imagination and in due respect for facts. Of this type the Chronicler may be taken as a fair specimen. Like the writer of Job he is a religious man, but, unlike

him, he finds no perplexities in the moral world, but everywhere a precise and mechanical correspondence between character and destiny. Not only is piety rewarded by prosperity, but prosperity presupposes piety. The most pious kings have the most soldiers. David has over a million and a half, Jehoshaphat over a million, while Rehoboam has only 180,000. Manasseh's long reign of fifty-five years—a stumbling-block on the Chronicler's theory—has to be accounted for by his repentance (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11 ff.). Religious explanations are everywhere assigned for facts. Josiah's defeat and death, for example, are the penalty of his disobedience to the Word of God which came to him through the Egyptian king (2 Chron. xxxv. 21 ff.). So Uzziah's leprosy is the divine punishment of his pride in presuming to offer incense despite the protests of the priests (2 Chron. xxvi. 16 ff.). What would the writer of Job xxi. have thought of such a facile theodicy? But it is not only that the Chronicler sees God as the immediate arbiter of human destiny, whose rewards and punishments are swift and just and sure: he has no hesitation in coercing recalcitrant facts into line with his theory. In 1 Samuel xxviii. 6 it is implicitly said that Saul earnestly sought to discover the divine will: in 1 Chron. x. 14 this is roundly denied—he did not inquire of Jehovah. In 1 Kings ix. 11–14 Solomon gives Hiram cities in return for the loan of money, whereas in 2 Chron. viii. 2 it is Hiram who gives Solomon the cities. The Chronicler tells us that Jehoshaphat of Judah joined with Ahaziah of Israel, and attributes to that union the wreck of his fleet (2 Chron. xx. 35); according to 1 Kings xxii. 49 he refused to join him: and so on. The point is that religion in the post-exilic period is represented by widely different types—on the one hand, we have a mechanical faith which finds the world easy to inter-

pret and calmly transforms such facts as may stand in the way; and on the other hand, the fearless facing of fact and the daring challenge, in the name of the higher Justice, of the facts which seem to offend it. If we may compare things widely different, it is roughly reminiscent of the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant mind.

(ii). *Attitude to the Community and the Individual*

Another aspect of the variety of outlook in the post-exilic Church is that there is now a genuine appreciation alike of the value of the community and of the individual. It is far from true to say, as has sometimes been said, that in pre-exilic times the only unit for religious thought is the community, and that the individual is the discovery of Jeremiah; but it is true that in that period the community bulked as a religious unit immensely more than the individual. And it is surely no accident that the individual's emergence into prominence is coincident with the collapse of the state. Then, more than ever before, the God of Israel becomes the God of the Israelite, "for they shall all know Me, saith Jehovah, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Jer. xxxi. 34). This does not mean that the communal idea is lost; even the famous oracle from which this text is taken, and which gives so noble an expression to the relatively new idea of religious individualism, represents the new covenant as made "with the house of Israel"; but the old idea is immeasurably enriched. Here, as in so many other spheres, Ezekiel points the way to post-exilic development. It is he who repeatedly and elaborately emphasizes the truth of the potential worth and responsibility of the individual—"the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die" (xviii. 4); but it is he also

who saw, far more clearly than Jeremiah, the importance of an organized community for the nurture of the religious life, and who devotes nine whole chapters of his book (xl.–xlviii.), of which indeed they are the crown and climax, to an elaborate sketch of its organization with the laws which should regulate and the officers who should govern it. If Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi remind us of the importance of the Church, books like Job and Ecclesiastes, with their notes of independence and challenge, remind us of the sacred rights of the individual.

(iii). *Attitude to the Future Life*

The variety of post-exilic thought is further evidenced by its conflicting attitude to the question of the future life. Pre-exilic thought had not concerned itself with this question at all, partly because, as we have seen, it had not fully and clearly realized the potential worth of the individual soul. But when the problem did emerge, honest thinkers were sometimes to be found on opposite sides. The oscillations of feeling through which the soul passed, whose misery drove it for refuge upon the thought of a future life, but whose native honesty was reluctant to pass beyond the borders of experience, are fascinatingly portrayed in the Book of Job. His first and prevailing mood is that death is the end :

" As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,
So he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more " (vii. 9).
" Man dieth, and is laid low ;
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?
Man lieth down and riseth not " (xiv. 10–12).

But a flash illumines the dark future, as Job thinks of the tree cut down, yet blossoming again :

"For hope there may be for a tree;
Though cut down, it may sprout again,
And the shoots thereof need not fail.
Though its root in the earth wax old,
And its stem be dead in the ground,
It may bud at the scent of water,
And put forth boughs like a plant" (xiv. 7–9).

The poor tortured soul clutches at the thought—though it is immediately let go—that if there be hope for a tree cut down by the axe, may there not also be hope for the man laid low by the stroke of death? Doubtless the thought is pushed sorrowfully away as soon as it emerges, but it remains hidden somewhere in Job's mind; and later it leaps forth in the sublime, if only momentary, assurance that beyond the grave he will see his divine Vindicator face to face (xix. 25–27). This faith, once attained, is held with increasing confidence as the years go on. It is probably from the latter half of the fourth century B.C. that these words come:

"Thy dead shall arise and live;
They that dwell in the dust shall awake
And utter cries of joy" (Isa. xxvi. 19).

The fullest expression of faith in the resurrection of at least some—probably the martyred dead and their oppressors—is uttered, significantly enough, by one of the very latest voices of the Old Testament:

"Many of those that sleep
In the land of dust shall awake—
Some unto life everlasting,
And others unto scorn,
And abhorrence everlasting" (Dan. xii. 2).

But the point of peculiar interest is this, that this doctrine, which was fraught with such comfort and held with such passion by harassed souls, was during

the very same period by other voices, denied. There can be no mistaking the drift of Ecclesiastes. "The living know at least that they have to die, but the dead have no knowledge at all, and no further reward is possible for them—their very memory is forgotten" (ix. 5). "Nothing can be done or devised, known or appreciated, in Sheol, to which thou art going" (ix. 10). "The fate of men is the fate of beasts, their fate is one and the same. The one dies like the other. One breath is in them all, and man is no way superior to the beasts, for all is but an illusion. All are on their way to the same place. All spring from the dust, and to the dust they shall all return. Who can tell whether the human spirit goes upward, and the spirit of the beast downward to the earth?" (iii. 19-21). And if, as a foil to this melancholy outlook is to be urged that the writer contemplates the return of the spirit to the God who gave it (xii. 7), it may be replied that this too, as the following verse shows with its sad refrain, he regards as a vanity, and he may be thinking of the absorption of the human spirit (or it may be only the breath) in the universal spirit—in any case of the extinction of conscious personality. True, the context of one of these passages (iii. 17) and certain other words in the book (xi. 9b, xii. 14), point to a judgment apparently in the world beyond, but it is always extremely probable, and in fact is certain, that such passages are interpolations of a party in sorrowful conflict with the gloomy context. It is clear, then, that, even in matters of high religious importance, there is no soulless conformity or weak subservience to official opinion. Strong men go their own way, and later editors at any rate recognise that they too have their place within the Church.

(iv). *Attitude to the Foreigner*

Lastly, there are widely different attitudes in the early post-exilic Church to the foreigner: there is friendliness and there is hostility. Already during the exile both these attitudes are found. In its earlier half, Ezekiel, broadly speaking, contemplates the destruction of foreign nations as an indispensable preliminary to the reinstatement and restoration of Israel (chaps. xxv.–xxxii.); but in its latter half, Deutero-Isaiah envisages a salvation to be mediated through Israel to all the ends of the earth. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 22; cf. xlii. 4). This generosity had already been anticipated by the writer of the so-called prayer of Solomon in the noble words, "*Moreover, concerning the foreigner,* that is not of Thy people Israel . . . hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to Thee for" (1 Kings viii. 41–43), and it continues to inspire the greater-hearted men of the later time. But the prevalent mood was one of hostility: the "heathen" lay beyond the covenant. They stood for something which it was the very business of a good Jew to defy and destroy. The old temper, which in the far-off days urged the extermination of the Canaanites, was flaming still: it was a case of *Judæa contra mundum.* The most typical representatives of early Judaism are the fiercest in their hostility. Ezra demands the unconditional divorce of all foreign women who had been married to Jews, and one of the most passionate prayers in the Old Testament is his prayer that God may forgive this appalling iniquity (Ezra ix. f.). Nehemiah, as a practical statesman, takes the most vigorous and even violent action against the Jewish offenders: "I contended with them, and cursed

them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves" (Neh. xiii. 25). This antagonism to the foreigner reaches its climax in the bigotry, passion, and vengeance that thrill through the fascinating story of Esther. "The Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they would unto them that hated them . . . and they slew of them that hated them seventy-five thousand" (Esther ix. 5, 16). It is with a shudder that we read of Esther's request for a second butchery (ix. 13). Here we have the very apotheosis of vindictiveness, and our only comfort is that in all probability this wholesale butchery took place chiefly in the writer's imagination; but even though it was only a "paper massacre," doubtless the wish was father to the thought, and the story is eloquent of the lurid and sanguinary antagonism of the average Jew to alien peoples.

But what a joy to be able to set against this orgy of vindictive brutality the lovely books of Ruth and Jonah. It may be only a fancy which sees in the Book of Ruth a contemporary protest against Ezra's rigid demand for the divorce of foreign women; but whether, chronologically, it be an actual protest against that legislation or no, it is at any rate a protest against the temper which inspired it. Ruth is a Moabitess, and the book sweetly urges that such a woman as she, with her loving heart and her resolve to take Israel's God for her God (i. 16), is an Israelite indeed, and ought to be gladly given her place within the community of Jehovah worshippers. Foreigner though she be, she is in worth the peer of any woman in Israel, and she is honoured to become the ances-

tress of Israel's great king. It took courage to say those things to a nation of bigots; let us be thankful that the man who said them did not stand alone, but that others were found to say them too. The writer of Jonah holds up the bigotry of his countrymen to scorn in the person of his disobedient and loveless hero, who sat on a hill, with hatred in his heart, watching to see what would become of the enemy city, and yearning for its destruction (Jon. iv. 5). Within the all-comprehending mercy of God that writer embraces even cruel Assyria, the country which for nearly two centuries had sought to crush the life out of Israel. "Shall I not have pity upon that great city?" In his own wonderful way, with the subtlest and gentlest art, he tried—how unsuccessfully the Book of Esther makes too sadly plain—to inspire his narrow-hearted fellow-countrymen with something of the generosity of God Himself, who loved the whole world which His own fingers framed and did not desire that any should perish. The generosity which inspires the book and the intolerance which it so deftly satirizes are typical of two attitudes to the foreigner to be found within the post-exilic Church.

This consideration of the attitude of that Church to faith, to the individual, to the future life, and to the foreigner, displays among her sons a refreshing variety of outlook. Utterly intolerant that Church can hardly be said to have been which embraced within her fellowship types so conflicting as to be opposed even in some matters of crucial moment. Within the community of good men there ought to be now, as then, room for honest difference of opinion.

Dominant Motive of Post-Exilic Activity

Let us now see if there is any discoverable unity amid all this variety. Consider first the task which the returned exiles had to face: it was nothing less than the reconstruction of their shattered life. They returned from Babylon with Deutero-Isaiah's words of high hope and promise ringing in their ears and in their hearts. Weeping had endured for a long black night, but joy was to return in the morning. The Creator of the ends of the earth, who had brought them home, was neither faint nor weary. They had waited for Jehovah, and they had been comforted with the assurance that they would renew their strength, mounting up with wings as eagles, running without weariness, walking without faintness (Isa. xl. 31). The waste places were to be rebuilt and the Temple re-erected (xliv. 26–28). Their imagination kindled at the thought of their beloved Zion and at the glory that was to be hers in the near future. Nowhere is more beautiful expression given to these glowing hopes than in the fine picture in xlix. 18–21 of mother Zion welcoming back, with wonder in her eyes, the multitude of her children who had been scattered in the far-off land.

That was the dream: what was the reality? The small Book of Haggai reveals it in all its desolating pathos. The tragic disillusion, after eighteen years' struggle with the most adverse of circumstances in the home land, is poignantly expressed in the simple words: "Ye looked for much, and behold! little" (Hag. i. 9). A blight lay upon everything—their land, their grain, their wine, their oil, their men, their cattle—upon all their efforts and all their hopes (i. 11). They suffered from drought, bad trade, unemployment, opposition: "there was no hire for man, nor

any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the adversary, for I set all men every one against his neighbour" (Zech. viii. 10). There were enemies without and strife within: neighbouring peoples bent on harassing the little struggling community, and ill-feeling and discord among her own members. That was the situation to which Haggai and Zechariah addressed themselves. Their task, like ours, was that of reconstructing their dilapidated world: and in one sense the whole effort of the early post-exilic period was *to assert* or re-assert *their national individuality*, which, of course, was pre-eminently and all but exclusively a religious individuality. It is this that explains the manifold activities of statesmen, prophets, priests, and wise men — of Nehemiah, of Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Trito-Isaiah (Isa. lvi.–lxvi.), of Ezra, and of the men who edited the Book of Proverbs: it is this that explains the revival of the Temple in the earlier period and the creation of the synagogue in the later.

More than most nations the Jew has been conscious of his uniqueness, and vastly more than most nations has his development been governed by a single idea. Always their God had been their glory. As Julia Wedgwood has said, no other race "has left on the ear of humanity so definite an impression of a single voice." The sense of Israel's uniqueness runs throughout her literature from first to last: it is as old as the oracle of Balaam, "Lo! it is a people that dwelleth alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9), and it receives, as we have seen, fanatical expression in the very late Book of Esther (viii. 17, ix. 1 f.). Other nations, too, have had their individuality and their mission, but the Jew expressed his individuality and pursued his mission

with a sustained and deliberate consciousness which is without parallel. Every agency and institution was made to converge upon that end.

Indeed, the whole Hebrew development, at least as represented by its greatest personalities, may be regarded as a struggle against alien spiritual forces which threatened to imperil its own distinctive genius. Hebrew life, like Christian (cf. Eph. vi. 11 ff.), was a perpetual warfare. The type of life and religion which the Hebrew felt himself divinely called to realize and to present to the world was unceasingly imperilled, now in this way, now in that. In early times the Canaanites were the assailing force, later it was the syncretistic worship encouraged by kings like Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 31), Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 10 ff.), or Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 3 ff.); there was the ever-present menace of idolatry which persisted even during the exile (Ezek. xx. 32); after the return there were the assaults of Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines; and in the second century B.C. there was the most cruel and organized assault of all from the side of Græco-Syrian civilization. Against all this the Jew—and most deliberately in post-exilic times—sought to assert his national individuality. This is the secret of the unity in a literature of so much diversity.

It cannot be denied that sometimes—in such a book as Esther, for example—the assertion takes a peculiarly unlovely and indeed repulsive form; but it ought not to be forgotten that behind the form is a flaming jealousy for the fortunes of a people which is conscious of having a very precious deposit committed to its care. In this way, too, we can readily account for the rigour of an Ezra or the vehemence of a Nehemiah. These men felt that religion itself was at stake, and it was for religion that the Hebrew

had been sent into the world. The key to their conduct in insisting upon divorce of the foreign women lies in the simple phrase of Malachi (ii. 11) which describes such a woman as "the daughter *of a foreign god.*" Jezebel cannot come into Israel without bringing her Phœnician worship with her. The vigorous scene in Nehemiah xiii. 25, already alluded to, points the same moral. The thing that prompts Nehemiah to beat the Jews who had married women from the sister peoples and to pluck off their hair is that "their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and they could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people" (xiii. 24). To the devout Nehemiah bad Hebrew was an evil omen. The children's chatter in the streets suggested mongrel influences which could only end by destroying the purity of Hebrew religion, the Hebrew's only justification for existence, and thus shattering his mission to the world.

The Old Testament, read rightly, is one long protest, conscious or latent, from the beginning to the end. The religious distinctiveness of Israel, imperilled by war, trade and commerce, intermarriage, persecution, intercourse with idolatrous nations or subjection to idolatrous conquerors, is being continually defended in every variety of way. Numberless passages in the Old Testament, when we understand their historical implications, can be most luminously described as anti-Canaanite, anti-Assyrian, anti-Babylonian, or anti-Græco-Syrian. This does not mean, of course, that the Old Testament learnt nothing from the types of civilization which it attacked. In point of fact, it had a remarkably absorbent genius, and it learnt from them all, adapting, assimilating, and transforming. But that is another story. Here we are concerned with the aspect of protest. Some even of the most

innocent assertions of the Old Testament have, for the historical student, a definitely polemical flavour: there is far more "fight" in them than the ordinary reader imagines. The first chapter of Genesis, for example, is thoroughly anti-Babylonian. The Creation story, like the Flood story, is throughout an implicit criticism of the old heathen tales, and a deliberate elimination or transformation of such moral and religious qualities as were intolerable to the purer and austerer genius of the Hebrew religion. Take so simple a sentence as, "God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: (He made) the stars also." That is anti-Babylonian: it is a blow struck at the heart of the old mythologies which worshipped "the host of heaven," regarding the heavenly bodies as divine—a literary blow like that other blow dealt by Josiah to the priests and paraphernalia of sun, moon, and star-worship (2 Kings xxiii. 5, 11). Nay, it is more; as against the polytheism and the divided universe of Babylon, it involves the great conception of a universe which is truly one, under the control of a single sovereign Will which made and directs them. "*He* made them, and *He* set them in the sky." So far from being gods, they are only lamps. If that is not criticism, what would be? It is only missed because it is so subtle.

The Book of Daniel is another protest, obvious enough to one who reads it alongside of the First Book of the Maccabees. The faithful Jewish people, with their religion and their sacred books, were being assailed with unparalleled fury by Antiochus Epiphanes. Much that was attractive in Hellenic civilization, as well as much that was repulsive, was being thrust upon them; and the Book of Daniel is the answer. Alike against the allurements and the persecutions

of a pagan civilization it asserts the Hebrew religion with its austerity, its horror of idolatry, its gifts of comfort and strength and courage and hope; it counsels the sufferers to be patient but a little longer (xii. 12) and soon will come that Kingdom of God which shall know no end. The protest against contemporary pagan religion in Dan. i. is implicit, as in Gen. i., but it is as unmistakable. Daniel's refusal to partake of the king's food was well calculated to encourage men who had been put to the torture for declining to eat swine's flesh.

This assertion of national individuality in the face of the ever-present, if ever-changing, forces by which it was menaced or assailed, is the dominating impulse of the post-exilic age, directing the national energies of the Jews with a consciousness and a deliberation which is without parallel elsewhere; it shapes the ambitions and the policies of the leaders and the institutions of the people. It appears in operation very early in the flat rejection by Zerubbabel of the Samaritan offer to participate in the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra iv. 1–3). The Samaritans plead with some justification, "Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither." But Zerubbabel, who cannot forget the mongrel origin of the Samaritans, bluntly retorts, "Ye have nothing to do with us in building a house unto our God." It is the same sense of the peril, from alien intrusion, to all that the Hebrew people stands for that explains the feverish energy with which Nehemiah, on his return from Persia, hastens on the completion of the walls round about Jerusalem (Neh. iv.–vi.). At first but a heap of ruins which elicited only the scorn of Tobiah (iv. 2 f.), they were completed in the incredibly short

space of fifty-two days (vi. 15). Nehemiah, as truly as Ezekiel or Ezra, was one of the founders of Judaism, and his walls were a spiritual contribution to it. They were the barrier behind which the spiritual forces could develop, and without which anything might happen. For good, as well as for evil, the Jew shut himself off, and deliberately planned to lead his distinctive life.

(i). *The Church*

This life was encouraged and developed in several ways—by the Church and the priesthood, by prophets, by sacred books, by wise men, and later—though this bulks hardly at all in the Old Testament (cf. Ps. lxxiv. 8)—by the synagogue. The words "priest" and "church" are writ large over all post-exilic literature. Theirs are the supreme interests, not only in the quasi-historical legislation of the Pentateuch, but equally in definitely historical books like Chronicles and Ezra and in the activities of the prophets. In contrast to the intensely ethical spirit of the pre-exilic Amos, nothing can be more significant than the ecclesiastical temper of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, whose messages to a large extent turn upon the Temple and upon ritual obligation. With some justice it might be said of them, as has been said of Ezekiel, that they were priests disguised in prophets' robes. But all this only goes to show the enormous importance of the Church for the post-exilic period. Much of the precious inheritance of the past and all that was distinctive of the people was gathered round the formal observances of religion; and it was by this institution and by these observances that the Jews made their protest and defended their sacred deposit, against the insidious paganism that encircled them.

(ii). *Prophets*

The prophets, too, as we see, played their part, but it was not the old part. Gone is the torrent of ethical passion which lashed audiences into fury and brought the prophets themselves in peril of their lives. They are *epigonoi*, separated by a vast gulf from the days of the great prophetic fathers, and finally they disappear altogether; when the crisis is sorest not a prophetic voice is heard (Ps. lxxiv. 9; 1 Macc. iv. 46, ix. 27, xiv. 41). Where the priest holds sway, originality is stifled. As it was in the days of our Lord, whom men mistook for a resuscitated "John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the (dead) prophets" (Matt. xvi. 14), because they had not daring enough to believe that God could create a new mighty personality, so it was in the days of Malachi (iv. 5), when the best that was hoped for was the reappearance on earth of the great Elijah. But prophecy, such as it was, ministered to a need, and went to strengthen the volume of protest against alien spiritual influences within and without the chosen people. The prophet would appeal to whatever enthusiasm and sense of unconventional approach to God was left in the people, just as the law would appeal to the more conventionally pious, and the wise man to the ordinary person on the level of his secular life.

(iii). *Scripture*

Unquestionably, however, Judaism found one of her great bulwarks in her sacred books. Deuteronomy started Israel upon the path by which she became "the people of the book"; and the sorrow-stricken exiles were driven by the love of their country's

past and their passionate belief in her future to gather up and put together and edit the now more than ever precious relics of ancient song and history and prophecy and law. Considering that some of those earlier tales, though they must have offended the mature religious sense of the later priestly editors, were not by them summarily dismissed, we may perhaps assume that they were already securely lodged in the consciousness of the people, probably in what we should now call "canonical" form. In any case it is evident that the Book early began to play an important part in nursing and developing the distinctive life of Judaism. It was a significant—some would say an ominous—day for Hebrew religion when Ezra "the scribe" appeared with "the law of God in his hand" (Ezra vii. 14). The vivid description in Nehemiah viii. of the festival at which, for a week, the law was daily read and expounded, marks a new epoch in the history of the Jews. The impulse given by the exile to the collection of their sacred literature did not die down till all the books that had sustained the life of the Church were securely gathered into one great final collection. The steps of the process can be traced: by the year 400 B.C. the Pentateuch was practically "canonical," by 200 B.C. the prophetical and the prophetico-historical books, and by 100 B.C. all the others. It was a sound instinct—though not without its grave perils, as subsequent history has shown—that threw the Jew with ever-increasing passion upon his sacred books. In them was life, more particularly *his* life, the life which he was to incarnate and with which he was to challenge and confront the world. And it was a sound instinct that prompted Antiochus Epiphanes to aim at their destruction. He could not have dealt the spirit of Jewish nationality a deadlier blow. His Syrian soldiers "rent

in pieces the books of the law which they found, and set them on fire. And wheresoever was found with any a book of the covenant, and if any consented to the law, the king's sentence delivered him to death" (1 Macc. i. 56 f.). But, as Ryle says (*The Canon of the Old Testament*, p. 135), "the blow of the persecutor ensured the preservation of the Sacred Books." The more powerfully their national and religious life was assailed, the more tenaciously did the Hebrews cling to their sacred books as the guardian and nurse of that life. All the facts go to show that it was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans that finally led the Jewish Rabbis to determine once and for all, by official pronouncement, the limits of the Hebrew Canon. When they had lost their independence, their country, their Temple, their material all, they rallied their national life round the Scriptures; and it has proved as indestructible as they.

(iv). *The Wise Men*

The synagogue, the appeal of whose services was spiritual, not spectacular, must also have been a great support to Jewish religion on its non-ritual side; but, as it is scarcely alluded to in the Old Testament, we shall here pass over it and conclude by pointing out the place of the Wisdom literature and of the wise men in the strengthening of that which was distinctive of Hebrew religious and national life. Some of that literature is very daring, like Job and Ecclesiastes. These books are—like the Old Testament generally, as we have tried to show—protests: this time not a protest against degrading external influences, but against shallow and conventional attitudes of piety within Israel herself, a protest against a too facile faith which ignores facts. The Book of Proverbs,

however, which is more dispassionate, and more moralistic than religious in the narrow sense, meets the average man on the ordinary levels of his secular life. But can this book of apophthegms, most shrewd, some witty, some commonplace, be in any sense regarded as a protest against some anti-Hebrew view of life? There are brilliant passages, like the notable description in the eighth chapter, and especially *vv.* 22–31, which make one feel how solemn and wonderful a thing Wisdom was to the profounder Hebrew mind. But what of the book as a whole? Does it encourage the good Jew to cherish his own religion against the seduction of other appeals?

Yes, this book, too, is a protest—a protest against the subtle and all-pervading spirit of the time when the wise men were teaching in their casual and unprofessional way: it was the spirit of Hellenism. Mr W. A. L. Elmslie has put this with remarkable power and lucidity in his fine *Studies in Life from Jewish Proverbs* (pp. 98 f.). "Hellenism," he says, "was swiftly becoming the very atmosphere men breathed. Certainly its manifold allurements were only too visibly and temptingly displayed before the eyes of the young and ambitious in Jerusalem. And yet Hellenism had met its match in the strange city of Zion. Greek met Jew, and in the struggle the Wise-men of Israel played no insignificant part. For they marshalled and moulded their proverbs till they represented the Wisdom of Israel set over against the worldly-wisdom of Greece. They counselled a way of life which was not the seductive Greek way. They sturdily opposed another doctrine to the fashionable immorality of Hellenism with its overwhelming prestige and its ostensible success. For several generations the attack of the new civilization came by way of peaceful penetration, which was perhaps harder

to resist than open enmity, since nobody could deny the good in Hellenism, its beauty, and its cleverness, if only it had been pure in heart. Later . . . the campaign was to be conducted with all the devices of reckless and inhuman violence. Hebraism against Hellenism! All Egypt, Syria, and Persia had made scarcely an effort to resist the spell of the new learning and the new ways. At first sight, then, how unequal the contest! A stiff moralism preaching against the pleasures of sin to hot-blooded, able, and ambitious men. A clique of obscurantists arrayed not against a kingdom or an empire but against a magnificent world-conquering civilization. The Jews maintain their ground? Impossible! No, not wholly so; for this battle . . . was ultimately spiritual; and because the Jews held a conception of the nature and destiny of man deeper, truer, than even the Greeks had found, Hebraism in the end proved stronger than Hellenism with all its genius and all its works." To this end the Proverbs, for all their seeming pedestrianism and simplicity, made a contribution of inestimable worth, because they insisted with unceasing iteration that there is no true wisdom apart from the fear of the Lord. Virtue is safe only when it grows upon the soil of a religion which has austerity at the heart of it, and the brilliant philosophies which deny this only illuminate the road that leadeth to destruction.

So it may be roundly said that the whole of post-exilic life and literature is organized round a protest. Was there ever a literature in which the presence of an enemy is so pervasively felt as it is in the Old Testament? Sometimes within Israel and sometimes without, but always he is there; he haunts the music of even the quietest Psalms (xxiii. 5). Israel's life is always being assailed by forces, material or spiritual or

both—by Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Samaritans, Arabians, Greeks, Syrians. The story of the full-armed Philistine giant, ready to crush the little Hebrew boy, but defeated by him in the end, is a pictorial summary of Hebrew religious history. The life of the Hebrews, and especially from the exile on, was a struggle to keep that which they believed God had committed to their trust, and by various devices and with varying success they have kept it unto this day.

VII

THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT[1]

"In the thinking of civilized men," wrote Sir George Adam Smith in his Yale lectures delivered twenty-three years ago, "there has been for years a steady ebb from the shores of another life." The war has changed all that; and one of the many services of the Old Testament is that it helps us to see how the men of an older day reached the beliefs to which we cling to-day.

The Old Testament is the literary deposit of a long historical and religious development: it is therefore no surprise that there should be in it no uniform conception of the state of the dead. But, roughly speaking, three stages may be observed in the development, though they are not to be sharply distinguished from one another: for some of the beliefs of the older period continued to prevail in some quarters to the very end. There is (i) the period when the dead were believed not only to continue to exist, but to be possessed of special knowledge and power, and to be in a sense divine, *'elohim*; (ii) the period when this conception was driven out under the pressure of an increasingly powerful monotheism; and (iii) the period which saw the rise and growth of the belief in the resurrection: and this no doubt led to that revival of interest in Sheol which is attested by the Apocalyptic literature.

[1] From *The Holborn Review.*

I

First, then, the period when the dead were believed to be in some real sense divine, and possessed of special knowledge and power. Traces of this period are relatively rare, because this stage of the religion had been in the main transcended, at least by the profounder spirits of Israel, by the time the ancient tales began to assume literary form. The most significant passage in this connection is the story of the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel xxviii., which shows that the dead—at least such dead as Samuel—were believed to possess special knowledge, as indeed they came to be called "the knowing ones." It is to acquire a knowledge of his fate that Saul resorts to her: "that thou"—as he says when the shade of Samuel appears—"mayest make known to me what I shall do": and the story sets its seal on the belief that the dead prophet has a real knowledge of the purpose of Jahweh and is able to communicate it. The dead man is actually called a god by the witch—"I have seen *'elohim*." It was no doubt because the dead were really regarded as divine that the consultation of them had been proscribed by the better minds of Israel, who refused to tolerate any other God, at least for Israel, than Jahweh. But in spite of this early proscription, the practice continued to flourish through prophetic and into post-exilic times. Isaiah (viii. 19) in the eighth century bitterly complains that the people resort to wizards that chirp and mutter, and on behalf of the living consult the dead instead of their God. In the next century the practice has to be denounced by the legislators (Deut. xviii. 11), and even the later legislation finds it necessary to warn the people against turning to "the ghosts and the knowing ones" (Lev. xix. 31). For post-exilic times, in the fifth century we have

the vivid picture in Isaiah lxv. 4 of those who sit among the graves and lodge by night in the secret places (LXX. caves)—no doubt with a view to the consultation of the dead.

The dead continue to be interested in the fortunes of their descendants: mother Rachel, dead for long centuries, weeps for the children who are taken away to the enemy's land in the time of Jeremiah (xxxi. 15) —weeps and refuses to be comforted. But it is not merely that, in a human way, the dead still watch and share the fortunes of this world; they were really divine; it is practically certain that they had once been worshipped, and that among the less progressive spirits of Israel this worship was for long maintained in spite of the earnest protests of prophets and legislators. The funeral rites and customs leave little doubt on this point: these are not merely expressions of violent grief, but expressions of the same kind of homage as was paid to the gods. When Deuteronomy (xiv. 1) says, "ye shall not cut yourselves for the dead," we remember that the same practice was resorted to on Carmel by the priests of Baal when they called upon their god, and the same word is used (1 Kings xviii. 28). There is further proof of the divinity of the dead in the erection of a pillar, *maççebâ*, beside the grave. Jacob set up such a pillar over Rachel's grave (Gen. xxxv. 20)—probably not a mere memorial pillar; it is the same word as is used for the pillar erected at a sanctuary, and the practice suggests that the tomb was so regarded.

The persistence and power of the dead are further suggested by the belief that blood spilt upon the ground could cry (Gen. iv. 10). To the ancient Semite this was no doubt a fact, not a figure; and this again explains why the blood had to be covered. In Leviticus xvii. 13 it is ordained that even the blood of a bird

or a beast that has been killed by a hunter must be covered with dust: this would appear to have the effect of holding the spirit down, which might otherwise roam abroad and work havoc to the living.

The very earnest desire of the ancient Hebrews, attested by the dying request of Jacob (Gen. xlvii. 30), Joseph (Gen. l. 25) and Barzillai (2 Sam. xix. 37) to be buried in the family grave is not to be attributed to considerations of sentiment, but is connected no doubt with the cult of the dead, which was cared for by the living members, at least by the living *sons*, of the family: compare the complaint of Absalom that he has no son to keep his name in remembrance (2 Sam. xviii. 18). We are here a whole world removed from the type of faith represented by the mother of Augustine who, when her friends asked whether she was not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city, replied, "Nothing is far to God: nor was it to be feared that at the end of the world He should not recognize whence He was to raise me again" (*Conf.* ix. 11).

It seems therefore certain that the dead were not only believed to persist, but to possess special power and knowledge, and to be worshipped as divine. Where were they? First of all, in the family grave: but they were also in Sheol. The two ideas are not strictly compatible, but they are both very old, and continue to persist side by side; and we see in the taunt song of Isaiah xiv. how the two conceptions tend to run into each other. "Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol: the worm is thy bed and the maggot thy coverlet" (xiv. 11). Even those who have no tomb are somewhere in Sheol: Jacob, *e.g.*, expects to go to his son to Sheol, though he believes that he has been torn by a wild beast (Gen. xxxvii. 33, 35). Sheol is in the depths of the earth—a land of dust

(suggested by the desert ?) and of darkness (suggested by the grave ?). It is

> " The land of darkness and gloom,
> The land of murky darkness,
> Of gloom and utter confusion,
> Where the very light is as darkness " (Job x. 21 f.).

If the passage in Ezekiel xxxii. 18–32 may be taken as representative, each nation—Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc.—appears to form in Sheol a group by itself: " Elam is there and all her company, her graves are round about her." The people of Sheol are weak and flaccid (Isa. xiv. 10), but they still retain something of the pomp and circumstance of life in shadow form. There are distinctions—those who were kings on the earth are kings below—but they are not moral distinctions. According to the passage already alluded to (Ezek. xxxii. 27 ff.) there are two compartments in Sheol—one for the warriors who have been regularly buried, and one, the pit, for those who have not received the regular funeral honours. We hear also in Proverbs vii. 27 of the *chambers* of death, to which those will descend who frequent the house of the strange woman. Perhaps here we find the source of the idea which was developed in the Apocalypse of Enoch, of the four compartments of Sheol. The dead wear the dress and bear the marks they bore in life. As the prophet Samuel had worn his mantle, so the warrior has still his sword, and the uncircumcized are uncircumcized still.

II

The second period is that in which the dead lose the place they held—pushed out of it by the growth of monotheism and by the rise of individualism. As the history moves on, the people of Sheol grow gradually

more weak and shadowy. So far from being divine, they are but a feeble folk, though still substantial enough to be recognizable. The most vivid picture of the occupants of Sheol has been preserved for us in the magnificent song in which the dead kings extend their ironical welcome to the king of Babylon when he descends to the world below[1]:

> " Sheol beneath is a-quiver,
> Awaiting thine arrival;
> She rouseth the shades to greet thee—
> All that were chieftains on earth.
> All the kings of the nations
> She biddeth arise from their thrones.
> All of them lift up their voices,
> And thus they say unto thee:
> ' So thou, too, art feeble as we;
> Thou art become like us.
> Is this the man that startled the earth
> And sent tremors through her kingdoms ? ' "
> (Isa. xiv. 9 ff.).

So far from possessing supernatural knowledge, the dead are said in Ecclesiastes ix. 5, 10 to have no knowledge at all: the dead know nothing, " for nothing can be done or devised, known or apprehended, in the underworld to which thou art going." So far are the distinctions of earth from being perpetuated—kings as kings and warriors as warriors—that they are all upon the same level, the same *dead* level.

> " The small and the great are alike,
> And the servant is free from his master:
> Prisoners at ease together,
> Deaf to the task-master's voice " (Job iii. 18 f.).

There are no moral distinctions; there are no distinctions: " Sheol has been democratized."

[1] The translation is taken from my *Isaiah in Modern Speech* (Jas. Clarke & Co.)

(i). Now how are we to account for this change, for this loss of place and power on the part of the dead? The answer begins to be evident when we consider the date of the passages which reveal this new conception. The poem which brings out so vividly the feebleness of the dead comes from the late exile, and Ecclesiastes is probably three centuries later still. Between the story of the witch of Endor and the taunt-song lies the great prophetic movement, and the difference between the story and the song shows how well the prophets had done their work. In other words, it is to be explained, in part, by the rise of monotheism. The dead, as we have seen, were once *'elohim*, and their cult was therefore a rival cult to Jahweh's. Not indeed a serious rival: for He was the God of the nation, while the interests of the dead were confined to the family. But, whether serious or not, their worship was a breach both of the letter and the spirit of the second commandment, "Thou shalt have *no other* gods before Me." This seems also to be the implication of the passage already quoted from Deuteronomy xiv. 1. "Ye are the children of Jahweh your God, (and therefore) ye shall not cut yourselves for the dead." The meaning is not that they were not to deface the beautiful handiwork of God by mutilation —that is a modern idea—but that as children of Jahweh, the one and only God, they were not to implicate themselves in a rival cult.

And this is the reason why the prophets and the legislators so sternly pursue and proscribe the worship of the dead and the necromantic practices which accompanied it; those things were not merely foolish superstitions, but they dethroned Jahweh from His supremacy: at least they were not compatible with His exclusive divinity and with that singleness of devotion which He, as the only God, had a right to

demand. So the things which had any sort of connection with the dead—houses, vessels, the grave, etc.—the legislators pronounce to be unclean. Wherever anything is declared unclean, we may be practically certain that we have to do with a rival cult: so with animal worship, the swine, the mouse (Isa. lxv. 4, lxvi. 17). The more therefore the absolute supremacy of Jahweh is felt—and it is one of the great tasks of the prophets to make the people feel this—the more does the power of the dead decline. Jahweh is of course never described as the God of Sheol; but He is the God of the universe, and therefore of Sheol as part of the universe: there can be no other gods there; and there was bound to come a time when His power and His presence would be felt as surely to pervade the under-world, as they pervaded and controlled the heavens and the earth—a time when a psalmist could boldly say, "Though I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there" (Ps. cxxxix. 8).

But during the great prophetic period the interests of Jahweh are conceived as concentrated upon the living nation and the world of men, and there is a notable disinclination to bring Him into direct contact with Sheol. "Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall My hand take them" (Amos ix. 2)—but He is, strictly speaking, not there: He has to stretch down His hand to reach it. But though He has strictly no concern there, the dead who *are* there have no power to compete with Him; for He is the only God, and all power is His. They cannot be also gods: before Him who is the Absolute, they are simply depotentiated. Though they themselves still persist, their power and significance for the fortunes of the living recede into the background till they practically vanish. The living have now nothing to hope or to fear from the dead, and their worship gradually passes away, though per-

haps not completely, as practices reminiscent of it are still found in later times (cf. Tobit iv. 17).

(ii). The worship of the dead was thus gradually dislodged by the conception of Jahweh as the only God. It received also a fatal blow from another quarter, namely, from the rise of individualism. The worship of the dead rests on the idea of the solidarity of the family, and the growth of individualism tended to destroy it. The dead were safe, so to speak, in the religious regard of the people, so long as the family remained the unit. They were able to affect and to be affected by the fortunes of their descendants. The dead fathers could still be punished in the persons of their living children, and the sorest punishment of all would come on the day when the family was exterminated, and the cult could no longer be maintained. But the collapse of the nation as a religious unit brought with it the perception of the indefeasible significance of the individual, and this again reacted on the attitude of the living to the dead. The teaching of Ezekiel is that the individual is the architect of his own fortunes, the maker of his own destiny: it is his character, his own character, and nothing but his character, that determines his fate, which is not affected, either for good or evil, by the virtues or the vices of the fathers, whether living or dead. If, then, it is the moral quality of a man's life that determines his destiny, the result must inevitably be to push the dead into a more and more subordinate place in the scheme of the living till, so far as any sense of their power is concerned, they are simply left behind—till, indeed, they become the strengthless shades that croon their weird song over the king of Babylon; or till, as in Ecclesiastes, they cannot even croon—they can know and do simply nothing at all.

III

The third period is marked by a reaction against all this, due to a wider thought of the moral order and to a set of historical circumstances and spiritual experiences which evoked a belief in the resurrection. The uncompromising assertion of exact retribution, proclaimed in Ezekiel's law of individualism, was bound to be felt in time—and indeed was felt very soon—to be out of harmony with the facts of experience. The tension between a good man's legitimate expectation and the facts had already been acutely felt by Jeremiah; and there must have been many a good man besides Josiah, who had taken a sincere and active part in the Deuteronomic reformation, and who had afterwards been slain on the field of Megiddo, just as twenty years afterwards there was many a good and faithful servant of Jehovah swept into exile.

(i). Here no doubt we have to look for one of the ultimate sources of the belief in the resurrection. To men who believed as tenaciously as did the Hebrews that God was just—just not only to the nation, but also to the individual (for *he* had now to be considered) —if justice was not done here and now, then it must be done, if not in some other place (for the Old Testament heart always clings to this world) then at some other time. More than once the Book of Job touches that thought, or one very similar to it (xiv. 13–15).

"O wouldst Thou but hide me in Sheol
Out of sight, till Thine anger be past,
And then call me to mind in Thine own set time!
If a dead man may live once again,
I could wait all the days of my warfare
Until my release should come.
Thou shouldst call, and I would answer:
Thou wouldst yearn for the work of Thy hands."[1]

[1] This translation is taken from *The Wisdom Books in Modern Speech* (Jas. Clarke & Co.).

It is of course quite certain that this is not the prevailing mood of Job. He shares for the most part the common Hebrew view of the dreariness, the hopelessness, the inexorableness of Sheol. "As the cloud is consumed and vanishes, so he that goes down to Sheol shall come up no more" (vii. 9). There is hope of a tree which is cut down, but none for the man whom the stroke of death has laid low (xiv. 7–12). "Man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens are no more." But part of the undying charm and value of the Book of Job is that we see his deep darkness lit once and again by flashes of a higher faith born of his unconquerable passion for justice and for God. We see him in his sublimest moment in the great passage chap. xix. 25–27 where, after making his vain appeal first to his friends and then to posterity, he expresses his faith in the immortal words, "As for me, I know that my Vindicator liveth, and that He will one day stand over my dust." So far the text and meaning are fairly clear; but it is very much to be regretted that the text of the following lines seems hardly to be preserved in its original form. With regard to the line rendered in the Revised Version, "And after my skin hath been thus destroyed," the one thing we can say with some probability is that the exact text and meaning have been lost, perhaps beyond recovery: while in the famous line "Yet in (or *from*, R.V. or *without*, Amer. R.V.) my flesh shall I see God" is capable of the most diverse interpretations. It has been taken to refer to a resurrection body; the preposition *min* being regarded as equivalent to *without*, it has been held to point to some sublime experience of Job as a disembodied spirit; it has even been referred to some vindication which he is to enjoy in the flesh in this world and before he dies. But the word "flesh," on which so much

turns, was not read by the Greek Version at all; and it does not seem prudent, however tempting it may be, to build much upon a word which has not the support of our oldest witness to the text. The word read by that version presupposes a text which bears some resemblance to the word rendered "He that voucheth for me" (my Sponsor) in xvi. 19, and the word for "skin" in the preceding verse is extremely like the word for Witness: so that the whole may well have run something like this:

> "I know that there liveth a Champion,
> Who will one day stand over my dust.
> Yea, Another shall rise as my Witness;
> And as Sponsor shall I behold—God."

This reading of the passage, though we miss the physical details of the flesh and skin, yields a view of this great dramatic moment no less daring, suggestive, and vivid than that of the more familiar rendering. We know that Job had already thought of the love of God as searching for him after he was gone (vii. 21), as hiding him in Sheol till the divine wrath was overpast, only to remember him and bring him up again (xiv. 13 ff.); and here again, in this more perplexing passage, he seems to be thinking of the world beyond. Swiftly descending as he is, to the grave, in humiliation and agony, he comforts himself with the great and beautiful thought that he will see God as his Vindicator on the other side.

(ii). This hope, or this certainty, if you like—*I know*—seems to be created by the moral demand for justice, by faith in the moral order. But the same hope and certainty are sometimes reached in the Old Testament along another line—the religious need of God. These two needs no doubt very often run into one another in the Old Testament: it is often the injustices of the

present that drive men to God, and the God to whom it drives them is the God of justice. To some extent this is true even of Psalm lxxiii. which towards its close reaches a height so noble. It is written by a man who was perplexed and grieved by the success of wickedness. But to this psalmist, as to many another, God is not only a means to the rectification of the anomalies of this world: He is loved for His own sake and He is an end in Himself. But the point is that the communion between the writer and his God, begun on earth and never more vividly realized than in sorrow, is so intimate and sure that he cannot conceive it as being sundered even by death itself. He feels sure that the God whom he worships will not forsake His friends—not at least of His own free will; and Death can only compel Him to forsake them, if Death is mightier than He—and this was not conceivable. There were some stories in the older literature, like the raising of the Shunammite's son or the ascension of Elijah (cf. the allusion to Enoch in Gen. v. 24) which must have encouraged the belief that death could be defeated or escaped, and so prepared the way for such a faith as we find in the Psalm.

The two psalms which it is customary to quote in this connection—the 16th and 17th—will perhaps hardly bear the weight which has been placed upon them. In the line, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15), the words "when I awake," which have been referred to the resurrection morn, may be just as well referred to the awaking of every new day, as in Ps. iii. 4, "I awoke, for Jahweh sustained me." But more probably the text is faulty, and we should simply read, "I shall be satisfied *when I behold* Thine image" —a phrase used of the living Moses in Num. xii. 8. Again in Ps. xvi. 10 the words "Thou wilt not

abandon my soul—that is, *me*—to Sheol" ("leave my soul in hell" is a mistranslation—the *in* as much as the *hell*) if the speaker is an individual, may mean no more than that he expects to recover from the sickness which has threatened his life. But it is not improbable, at least not impossible, that the speaker is the Church, in which case nothing more is stated than that the life of *the Church* shall never end.

(iii). The third line by which a belief in the resurrection was reached was by way of the Messianic hope, the national hope of the restoration of Israel and of the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. The consciousness of the Hebrew had always been deeply social; it began with the nation, and to the nation it returned. This hope was greatly stimulated by the sorrows and the triumphs of Maccabean times in the second century B.C. Those who had died in disgrace or in torture, it was felt, must surely find some place in the coming kingdom, and to find it they had to be brought back from the dead. Now this idea had already dawned upon the mind of Israel about two centuries earlier. "Thy dead shall live," we read in Isa. xxvi. 19, "and the dwellers in the dust shall arise and shout for joy." The resurrection is here confined, however, to Israel: it is expressly said that the enemies of Israel shall not live or rise again (xxvi. 14). It is, in other words, simply a resurrection of the good; but the ethical seriousness, so central to Hebrew religion, was bound in time to demand that in the world beyond the law of retribution should apply no less to sinners than to saints; and this claim is definitely made in the Book of Daniel (xii. 2), where not only do some of those who sleep in the dust awake to everlasting life, but others to shame and

everlasting abhorrence. From this point of view, the individual resurrection, for which, as we have seen, certain narratives of the earlier literature had prepared the way (cf. 2 Kings xiii. 21), is a blend of the Messianic hope and of faith in the law of retribution: and the moral order which could not be fully justified in this world was thus justified in the next.

Belief in the resurrection was also determined, no doubt, in part by what we may call the human desire to recover the personality, the whole personality. Not as spirit only, but as body and spirit, do we know ourselves in this world or are we known to our friends; and as the man is both body and spirit here, so must he be in the world beyond.

Thus there were three lines of thought which led out in the Old Testament to belief in the life after death: the moral demand for justice, the religious need of God, and the hope in the Messianic kingdom.

There are two questions which suggest themselves at the close of this discussion. The Old Testament shrinks in horror from the attempt to enter into communication with the spirits of the dead, and the general temper of the Christian Church has been overwhelmingly against such an attempt; but are we who have discarded the cosmological conceptions of the Hebrews with so much else, are we bound to accept this limitation? Has the religious man the right to say, in the name of religion, to the scientific man who ventures to explore the secrets beyond, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no further"? That is the one question, and the other is this. Does the modern mind feel as keenly as the ancient the cogency of the arguments just presented in favour of the future life, more especially the need for an ultimate justice and the need of God? Is it satisfied by the

argument that the moral order, in so far as it seems to be incompletely vindicated in this world, must be completely vindicated in some world beyond, and that the link between the believer and his God must be for ever indissoluble? Do these considerations need re-enforcement? If they do, do they find it in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus? And if there be those who, for reasons which seem to them to be good and conclusive, are not able to accept the resurrection of Jesus as a fact, what then?

VIII

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE BIBLE [1]

I. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

WHATEVER else the Bible is, it is at any rate a record of religious experience. The men from whom it came had found God, and it is in His light that they see light. For them there is no interpretation of the world, of history, or of life, apart from Him. It is He in whom all things and all men live and move and are; and, however interesting the things and the men may be in themselves, it is not with this interest that the Bible is primarily concerned, but with the interest that gathers about them or inheres in them, through their relations to God. Thus, in the Bible, history is not written for its own sake, it is regarded as an exhibition of the divine purpose that runs throughout the ages toward some magnificent consummation; prophecy is the passionate presentation of the divine character and demands before the sluggish and besotted consciences of men: everywhere upon the life of man falls the light of God.

All this means that while the Bible is a revelation of God, it is no less a revelation of man. Its words let us look into the life and nature of God; they bring us, as no other human words so powerfully and completely bring us, into the presence of that great eternal Person, with whom every living

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

soul has to do. But they do more. They let us look into the inner life and experience of the writers themselves. Their words are their testimony, often all unconscious, to the quality of their inward spirit. This, of course, is obvious in the case of the Psalms: there men are pouring out their hearts before God and, in the process, the revelation of themselves is inevitable. But this revelation is no less genuine, even where it is less obvious. The Biblical historians, when they are recording and interpreting fact, are no less surely exhibiting their own faith. They are telling us what *they* see in the history, and thus incidentally disclosing their own religious capacity, experience, and outlook. Similarly, the prophets who present so earnestly the claims of God upon society and the individual, have first apprehended God for themselves, or rather been apprehended of Him: it is in the constraint of a divine possession that they come before their audiences to deliver their sublime appeal. It is out of the depths of an intimate religious experience that they say what they say and plead as they plead. The words of the Bible are a window into the souls of the men who penned them. In this sense the whole Bible is autobiographical, as indeed, in a sense, all literature is.

A systematic study of the Bible from this point of view would be extremely valuable. Read as a record of religious experience, it would bring us face to face with the men of the ancient Hebrew world in their deepest and devoutest moods, and our religious life would be stimulated and deepened by the sight of theirs. Prophets and historians, anonymous though many of them be, would stand before us as living men, whose life was rooted in communion with God. This aspect of Biblical study has perhaps not been as prominent as it might have been. We

have had histories of Hebrew religion, volumes on Old and New Testament theology, studies of particular aspects of Hebrew thought, belief, worship, and practice; but, while it is of great scientific importance to trace the history of an idea through the centuries, and to watch it growing in purity and power, it is of no less religious importance to see the operation of that idea within some human soul. The real and vital power of the idea is only truly seen in its impact upon personality; and such a study as this, if executed sympathetically and scientifically, would bring us into the very innermost heart of Hebrew religion. Religion is more than an idea, or group of ideas: it is an experience—the experience of God. And an acquaintance with the men who had this experience—especially with men who, like the Biblical writers, were peculiarly sensitive and responsive to divine influences—would seem to be more *religiously* fruitful than a historical or theological study—important as this is—which simply traces ideas and examines their correlations. In this study and the four that follow, a tentative effort will be made in the direction indicated. We shall try to ascertain, so far as we may, some of the ultimate facts in the religious experience that lies behind the Bible, and to see something of the nature and effects of communion with God, as shared by the men whose words are there enshrined forever.

A beginning may appropriately be made with the prophets of the Old Testament. Doubtless there was real communion of a thoroughly spiritual kind —*i.e.*, unmediated by ephod, Urim, or other such sacerdotal paraphernalia—even in pre-prophetic times, whose religious level was probably higher than some recent criticism has been willing to allow. We select the prophets as the first of our studies, simply because

they are the most profound and conspicuous exponents and representatives of Israel's religion, and the phenomena of religious experience might naturally be expected to receive unique expression in them. The heart of the Old Testament is undoubtedly its prophecy; indeed the Hebrew prophets occupy a place of lonely pre-eminence in the religious history of the world.

Ample, however, as is the prophetic material, it is difficult for us to reach through it the sort of experience of which we are in search. It is, in the nature of the case, rather the outer than the inner aspects of their activities that come before us in their writings. Most of them were public men, and their writings are mostly public addresses, or, at any rate, fragments or summaries of such addresses. From the power of their public utterances, we are entitled to infer that they were men of great religious capacity; only men who knew God well, men to whom religion was the supreme reality, could have pled for Him as they did. But into their inner experience we are seldom permitted to look. The glimpse that we get of the prophet is as he stands before a popular audience, gathered, it may be, for some festival at a shrine, Bethel, or Samaria, or the temple of Jerusalem; and it is but seldom that we detect him in the act of direct communion with his God. His situation is analogous to that of the modern preacher. In the sermon we may feel sure that we are listening to the words of a true man of God, but the source of his power lies in a communion of which, the more spiritually sensitive the preacher is, the less will he be likely to say in public. It is in the inner chamber, when the door is shut, that the secrets of the heart are laid bare, and power for work is won. Our knowledge, therefore, of the prophets

on their inner side has to be gained largely by inference.

The prophets must have been men of extreme spiritual sensitiveness and receptivity; the whole drift and atmosphere of their speech is proof enough of that. But it is also very probable that this sensitiveness was encouraged by a certain physical and temperamental predisposition. Scattered hints, and occasionally fuller statements, seem to suggest that they were visited at times by religious experiences which were not indeed unique—least of all in the Oriental world—but certainly peculiar. Visions and voices are not unknown to them, and in these things we might be tempted to see some unique manifestation of God to their souls. The connection, however, of the literary prophets with their ecstatic predecessors must not be forgotten, and it goes far to explain these particular features of prophetic experience. True, Amos (vii. 14) disclaims all connection with the popular prophetic guilds; and, generally speaking, the methods, no less than the message of the literary prophets, differed very seriously from those in vogue in earlier times. But it is no less true that the pathological features which were so prominent among the so-called "prophets" of the time of Samuel and Saul continued more or less to mark the development of prophecy; they are sporadically present even in the writings of the prophets proper, and can be traced from Amos to Ezekiel, if not also Zechariah. It is not indeed an inevitable, but it is a very frequent, element in the prophetic temperament. Paul himself saw visions (2 Cor. xii. 4), heard voices, and could speak with tongues (1 Cor. xiv. 18). In the tenth century B.C., and when patriotic enthusiasm was kindled by the hope of resisting Philistine oppression, roving bands of ecstatic "prophets,"

kindled to frenzy by music, excite no surprise. But with the moral advance of prophecy, the old ecstatic element does not completely vanish. It is seen in Elijah when he runs before Ahab's chariot across the plain of Jezreel (1 Kings xviii. 46); it is seen in Elisha when he refuses to deliver his message until a minstrel is brought (2 Kings iii. 15). Stranger still, it is seen in Amos and Isaiah. In five visions (vii. 1–9, viii. 1–3, ix. 1) Amos sees ever more and more distinctly the doom advancing upon Israel; and in a time of intense political excitement, when Jerusalem was confused by rumours, Isaiah (viii. 11 f.) felt himself on one occasion grasped, as it were, by a mighty Hand. Such experiences are less to be wondered at in Ezekiel. The visions in which he seemed to be transported from the land of his captivity to Jerusalem (viii. 3) and back again to Babylonia (xi. 24) are no doubt to be partly explained by his special psychic susceptibility; and in any case the relative prominence of these and similar phenomena in Ezekiel is symptomatic of the decadence of prophecy. The visions of Zechariah, though they might be the result of prolonged contemplation, are probably little more than a literary device, though even as such, they are suggestive of the ominous change that is passing over prophecy. The point, however, is that prophecy, even upon its higher levels, does not invariably shake itself free from the ecstatic conditions in which it originated (cf. the very striking scene in Isaiah, chap. xxi.). It is perhaps no accident that the only pre-exilic prophet who has a *series* of visions to recount—Amos—is the one who stands nearest in time to the earlier and more distinctively ecstatic type of prophecy. Further, a certain pathological quality attaches to some of the symbolic acts even of the greatest of the prophets.

To say nothing of Ezekiel's escape through a hole which he had dug in the wall of his house, to portray the desperate fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem at its capture (xii. 1 ff.) there is the case of Isaiah walking barefoot through the streets of Jerusalem (chap. xx.), and of Jeremiah carrying a yoke upon his neck (chap. xxvii.). These acts were no doubt little more than devices to stimulate curiosity and give vivid expression to a neglected message. They are very far from proving that the prophets were ecstatics; they were deliberately done and afterwards minutely interpreted. And yet, to a western judgment at any rate, they seem to be on the borderland of the pathological.

It would be a complete mistake, however, to seek in the ecstatic phenomena of prophecy for that which is distinctive of prophetic communion with God. For, in the first place, these phenomena are in any case only sporadic, and in some prophecies are not present, or at least not traceable at all. The striking thing about the Hebrew prophets, as about Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 19), is not their ecstasy, but their sanity. If it is true that they are mastered by God, it is no less true that they are masters of themselves. If some of their visions come to them in trances or in dreams, others and indeed the great majority of them are seen through eyes that were very wide awake to the political situation, especially upon its moral side. In one remarkable passage Amos gives immortal expression to his conception of the world as an arena of law and order, cause and effect (iii. 1–8). In the rise of the Assyrians, he hears the awful voice of God, the growl of the terrible Lion which would in the not very distant future spring with a roar upon Israel and tear her to pieces. The prophets are the great interpreters of history and of the individual life, and

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

their interpretation is, in one aspect, the fruit of divinely illumined reflection and meditation. When Hosea begins his book by saying that Jehovah had told him to take a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom (i. 2), it is obvious that he is here interpreting his marriage from the point of view of his maturer experience of his wife's infidelity.[1] It is marvellous that in the impulse which led him to love the woman who brought a cloud of sorrow over his later life, he should have recognized the voice of God. This interpretation is half revelation, half reflection —Hosea could not have consciously distinguished between the two. His call to be a prophet came in no ecstatic way, but through the simple fact of his marriage to an unworthy woman, whose unworthiness was yet impotent to destroy his mighty love for her. Similarly we have no particular reason to believe that the call of Amos came in any unusual or ecstatic way. Considering his experience of visions—though even these appear to be little more than the natural result of long and painful reflection upon Israel's sin and probable doom — we cannot indeed absolutely say that his call may not have come through some ecstatic experience. But nothing in his account of it compels us to assume this. He simply tells us that as he was following his sheep, Jehovah "took" him (vii. 15). This may mean no more than that, brooding, as he often must have done, upon the deplorable situation in Israel, it suddenly flashed upon him that through him the divine word which was needed might and must be spoken.

The phrase, *Thus saith Jehovah*, which runs through prophecy from beginning to end, points no doubt originally to a communion of very special intimacy between

[1] Some recent scholars, however, have been inclined to interpret this literally.

the prophet and his God: it was almost as if words from the very lips of Jehovah of hosts fell upon the prophet's ears (Isa. v. 9, xxii. 14). But we make no special use of it in this discussion, for it seems in course of time to have acquired the more general meaning of the simple proclamation of the divine will. Indeed the same phrase is used in the Moabite stone of the god of Moab: "And Chemosh said to me"—Mesha king of Moab—'Go, and take Nebo from Israel'" (line 14).

It is plain, then, that ecstasy, though an occasional fact of prophecy, is by no means *the* fact, nor is it in such eccentric and exceptional experiences that we are to seek the prophetic communion with God. At the same time it has to be remembered that those very experiences could be, and occasionally were, to the prophets the medium of a supreme manifestation of God, and that through those experiences a communion so vivid and commanding was realized that it affected their whole subsequent career. We refer in particular to the prophetic call. Doubtless the men who heard the call were in every case deep-hearted men who had long and earnestly thought upon the sins of their people, and of the needs of the times, especially their infinite need of God—men to whom the very need constituted a call. But to some prophets—not demonstrably to all—there came a supreme moment in which this call was articulately heard in a definite spiritual experience. This is true of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, and of Ezekiel. But Ezekiel's vision (chap. i.), though no doubt thoroughly real, is so interfused with elaborate and complicated elements which appear to be the result of reflection, that the sense of the immediate presence of God is somewhat impaired—it is at any rate more difficult for us sympathetically to apprehend. A difficulty

of another kind confronts us in the story of Jeremiah (i. 4–10). That great prophet has the wonderful and reassuring sense of having been predestined to his high office before he was born. But that this assurance came, and that his ministry began, in an ecstatic experience, seems altogether probable. The difficulty in asserting this dogmatically is that the account of his call, as we have it, appears to be fragmentary. He speaks of Jehovah putting forth *His hand* (i. 9) and touching his mouth; and in this simple phrase we get a glimpse of an experience which, as Paul said of a similar experience, it was not possible for a man to utter. The fact that we are unable to explain the experience or to understand all that it involved, is no reason why it should be depleted, rationalized, or explained away. It is doubtless analogous to that other experience of the divine Hand (Isa. viii. 11) to which allusion has already been made. It comes not only to a Jeremiah whose heart throbs with emotion, and down whose face steal tears for the daughter of his people, but also to Isaiah of the strong and steady soul.

Indeed the ecstatic experience which in some cases constituted the prophet's call can be studied in its purest and simplest form in the call of Isaiah. Many of the elements which enter into his majestic vision can be traced to the prophet's own experience and environment. The thought of the mighty king of Judah, dead, might wake in his mind the thought of that other King who sat upon His throne for evermore. The seraphim may have been suggested by the brazen serpent (2 Kings xviii. 4), and their song by the music of the temple choir. But all this does not destroy the reality of the vision. It only shows that such a vision, like a dream, relates itself to experience. The sense of his sinfulness—of an un-

worthiness which not only disqualified him for service, but deserved death—the humble and horror-struck cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone," are most naturally explained by the prophet's own words when he says, "Mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." He may have come to the temple in a thoughtful and melancholy mood, with the burden of his country upon his heart, and fallen, through his meditation, into an ecstatic condition, in which he saw the glory which irradiated the world and the unseen Lord who kept him steadfast throughout his subsequent career.

Moments like these must have been of transcendent importance in the spiritual history of the prophets. But it must not be supposed that they were frequent; in all probability they were extremely rare. No doubt Isaiah, on another occasion, feels himself under the constraint of the Hand (viii. 11); but, in general, it is the glory of Hebrew prophecy, as represented by its great literary exponents, that ecstasy is relegated to the background. As we have seen, it is not altogether absent; it may even be at times of crucial importance; but so far from its being the normal medium of communion with God, it is not even frequent. It is extremely rare, and—this is significant—relatively frequent only in Ezekiel, the prophet who represents the beginning of the decadence of prophecy. The matter apparently stands thus. The sense of the divine presence and fellowship which came in the initial vision was so real and overwhelming that that presence and fellowship were forever after guaranteed (*cf.* Ps. lxxiii. 23 f.). The prophet was thenceforth continually sure of God and joyful in Him, even though the first ecstatic experience which brought the overwhelming conviction of Him should never be repeated, just as a later poet can rejoice in

SCHOOL OF THEOL

God, even though the fig tree and the olive should fail; that is, though those gifts should be withdrawn in which God was wont to manifest His grace (Hab. iii. 17 f.). The vision might pass, but God remained forever.

Whether this satisfying sense of God and His fellowship would be steadfastly held through a long and perplexing career, would of course depend partly upon the temperament of the prophet. In this connection, the contrast between Isaiah and Jeremiah is most instructive. Isaiah is a regal soul. Having seen the King once, he has seen Him for ever, and into his heart the vision has brought quietness, confidence, and serenity. Not so Jeremiah. More tender and emotional by nature, his sense of God (though not his faith in God) is more exposed to the gusts of circumstance. Opposition disquiets him, persecution perplexes him; there come times when he would fain stifle the divine word within him, and have done with it for ever. But it is mightier than he, and it flashes forth in spite of him, in words of fire (xx. 9). Jeremiah is to us the most interesting of the prophets because of the naïve candour with which he discloses the conflict between the human and the divine in his own soul.

This fellowship with God gave the prophet an insight into the purposes of God, and into the divine meaning of historical events, especially of great historical crises. God does nothing, as Amos said (iii. 7), without first revealing His secret to His servants the prophets. But this did not mean that, in individual cases of perplexity, the divine will was instantly revealed; it could be revealed only to those who were prepared to possess their souls in patience. More than once we find Jeremiah reaching certainty only through a period of watching and waiting. Once, as he lies

in prison, he hears a voice telling him to buy the field in Anathoth which his cousin will come to offer him for sale; and, when the cousin comes, "then I knew that this was the word of Jehovah" (Jer. xxxii. 6–8). Again, when Hananiah promises complete deliverance from Babylon within two years, at first Jeremiah (chap. xxviii.) does not know how to deal with the prophecy, and contents himself with pointing out that, according to the teaching of history, prophecies of peace are less likely to be fulfilled than prophecies of disaster. But afterward the conviction that Hananiah was wrong grew upon him until it became a certainty. Then he appeared, denounced Hananiah's message as a lie, and prophesied his death within the year.

The prophetic writings are addresses to the people, and we are therefore, as has already been said, seldom permitted to see the prophets in direct address to God. Here again Jeremiah is the prophet of whom on this side we know most. Even if he did not tell us himself (xx. 12), we could be sure that he was accustomed to "roll his cause upon Jehovah." His recorded prayers give, no doubt, a totally misleading impression of the man. Wrung from him as most of them were by the treachery and heartlessness of his people, they are largely prayers for the divine vengeance, expressed, too, in language of terrible realism (xii. 3). For us the interest of Jeremiah's prayers lies largely in the vehemence and familiarity with which he addresses God. He compares Him to a deceitful brook and to waters that fail (xv. 18). He charges Him with beguiling him into his prophetic mission, and thrusting him upon a career in which he had become a laughing-stock all the day (xx. 7). It is a pity that so few of the prophetic prayers have been recorded; but from what we do know, we may be quite sure that the

ministries of the prophets were constantly sustained upon prayer.

It is very suggestive and significant that we so often find the prophets in the rôle of intercessors. They spoke to men so powerfully for God because they had first spoken earnestly to God for men. Nearly all the prayers ascribed to Moses are intercessory. He prays that the leprosy may be removed from Miriam, he prays that his apostate people may be forgiven. Practically all the intercessory prayers of the Old Testament are offered either by prophets or by men, like Abraham and Job, whom later ages idealized as prophets. Elijah prays for the restoration of the widow's son (1 Kings xvii. 21), Amos twice prays that the blow may be averted from Israel (vii. 2, 5). A sense of the duty and power of prophetic prayer shines through the words of Jeremiah (xv. 1)—"Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind would not be toward this people" (cf. Ezek. xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20). Jeremiah appears to have habitually prayed for the people (xi. 14, xiv. 11), he claims to have "stood before Thee to speak good for them, to turn away Thy wrath from them" (xviii. 20); and in times of peculiar perplexity, during and shortly after the siege of Jerusalem, king and people alike request his prayers (xxxvii. 3, xlii. 2 f.).

In several directions, the effect of this communion with God is very marked even upon the outward life. In particular, it inspires the prophet with steadfastness and courage in moments of danger. He who feels that God is behind him and with him does not fear the face of man. It is this sense of the divine commission and presence that explains the fearless answer of the simple Tekoan shepherd to the warnings of the supercilious courtier-priest (Amos vii. 14–17). It is this that explains Isaiah's serenity when he goes

forth to face Ahaz, whose heart shakes "as shake the forest trees before the wind" at the rumour of the coalition against Judah (Isa. chap. vii.), and that enables him to make to Ahaz his magnificent offer of a sign from any part of the universe—from the heights above or the depths beneath (vii. 11). It is this that keeps him strong and steady when excitement and confusion reign in Jerusalem (viii. 12 f.; cf. xviii. 4). It is this that inspired the tender-hearted Jeremiah to face without flinching an angry crowd that was clamouring for his blood (Jer. chap. xxvi). "Jehovah of hosts—let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread" (Isa. viii. 13)—that was the prophetic motto; and the fear of Him drove out all fear of men or groups of men, political coalitions and foreign aggression, things present and things to come.

To the prophets this sense of God is not only an inspiration, it is a consolation amid all perplexity and sorrow. Jeremiah, for example, stands alone, without wife or child or any of the human joys that lift men over trouble or console them within it (xv. 17, xvi. 2). But all the more real to him is God. God is all that he has, and He must be everything. He is his refuge in the day of evil (xvii. 17), and His words are the joy and the rejoicing of his heart (xv. 16). His very defeat before men, as the late Professor A. B. Davidson remarks, "drove him into God's presence, as we may say, and gave him God. Feeling he had nothing else in the world—none else in the world—God became all to him. His life grew to be a fellowship with God; his thoughts seemed a dialogue between himself and God. If God seemed to deny him all other things, He gave him Himself."

IX

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE BIBLE [1]

II. IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Difficulties of many kinds beset the attempt to exhibit the piety of ancient Israel on the basis of the historical books of the Old Testament. The memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah constitute practically the only autobiographical material we have; consequently the glimpses that we get into the hearts of the actors in the great drama of Hebrew history are for the most part few and indirect. Again, though biography forms a relatively large proportion of the historical literature, in the main it is the story of the nation that is told in its pages—the rise, the progress, the decline, the fall of the nation, and its reconstitution as an ecclesiastical community; and naturally the men whose life-stories are told, are revealed rather in their public relationships and duties than in the intimacies of their private and personal religious life. We know a good deal, for example, of Josiah the reformer, but very little of Josiah the man.

For the earlier period the case is further complicated by the prominence, in the historical narrative, of theophanies and similarly primitive expressions of religious feeling. The appearance of divine messengers to Abraham and Lot, and of an angel to Hagar by a fountain of water, the ladder at Bethel upon which

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

angels ascended and descended, the "man" who wrestled with Jacob in the lonely night, these and a score of similar phenomena belong rather to the world of primitive religious conception than of historic fact, and cannot properly be used, as they have often been, to prove the unique intimacy of the patriarchs with God. And when we come down to times that may without challenge be described as historical we find that phrases which to us suggest communion with God can only be historically explained in a way which goes far to rob them of the spiritual suggestiveness which we are apt to associate with them. When we read, for example, that David (1 Sam. xxiii. 2) or Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 37), on critical occasions, sought to ascertain the will of God, it is not to prayer that they resort, but to the oracle; it is the priest with his ephod (1 Sam. xiv. 18, LXX), Urim (1 Sam. xxviii. 6) and Thummim (1 Sam. xiv. 41, LXX) that they consult.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that even those primitive and mechanical expressions of religious feeling are not incompatible with a real spiritual communion. The David who consults the priestly oracle is the David who, in moments of darkness and sorrow, finds his refuge in God. Undoubtedly the historical David was a man of prayer. When, in an early stage of his career, the people spoke of stoning him, "David strengthened himself in Jehovah his God" (1 Sam. xxx. 6). The dark hours of Absalom's rebellion are brightened for him by his faith in God (2 Sam. xvi. 12); into His hands he commits his case, and His stern discipline he meekly accepts (2 Sam. xvi. 10, xv. 25 f.).

Again, it seems altogether probable that the spiritual implications of the early patriarchal stories have frequently been under-estimated. Theophanies may

not be historical, but it does not follow that they therefore mean nothing. Do not their bold and picturesque imaginations point to a real fellowship between man and his God, vaguely apprehended it may be, impossible of definition or explanation, but real and vital to the soul that, in the presence of certain natural phenomena or spiritual experiences, felt herself to stand before a Mystery, a Person—felt that that Person was speaking to her, and that she could commune with Him? The Bible is crowded with dialogue—the speech of God to man and man to God: and can we suppose that all this is just a pretty fiction? It is impossible to believe this when we remember that the speech of God to man is not confined to the Mosaic or pre-Mosaic period, but occurs also in the books of Samuel and Kings, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and even in the New Testament. When we read that Jehovah spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Exod. xxxiii. 11; cf. Num. xii. 8)—even although the anthropomorphism is softened, almost corrected, in the same chapter (xxxiii. 20 ff.; cf. Deut. iv. 12) —we must surely suppose that behind such a pictorial expression lies some great spiritual reality. We do not dispose of it by simply saying that it is naïve. It is the ancient man's way of expressing his sense of a great and good man's communion with God. Indeed, this must have been the interpretation put upon such narratives by the later priestly school which incorporated those writings among their own —a school whose theology was as austere and unromantic as our own. (Contrast the severity of Gen. chap. i. with the poetry and anthropomorphisms of Gen. chaps. ii. and iii.)

Old Testament piety may be summarily described as the *fear of God*, or more pictorially, as a *walk with*

God. This latter phrase, however—used of Enoch and Noah—seems to point to some high and unique dignity, and the piety of ordinary mortals is usually characterized as a *walk before God.* Life is consciously lived *in His presence.* Devout men are those who "fear Jehovah, walk in His ways, love and serve Him with all the heart and with all the soul" (Deut. x. 12; cf. 1 Kings viii. 23), who "walk before Him in truth and with a perfect heart, and do that which is good in His sight" (2 Kings xx. 3). The supreme religious act and attitude is trust (Gen. xv. 6); this is the condition of security and prosperity (2 Chron. xx. 20; cf. Isa. vii. 9). There is something very charming about the simple piety of the earlier stories: as when, for example, Abraham's servant "looked steadfastly on Rebekah, holding his peace, to know whether Jehovah had made his journey prosperous or not" (Gen. xxiv. 21)—there is a whole world of religious significance in that earnest gaze—or when Laban and Bethuel, smitten by the wonder of the whole episode, acknowledge: "The thing proceedeth from Jehovah; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good" (Gen. xxiv. 50).

Life is pervaded by a sense of the presence of God: He is the "Shepherd" of all the good man's days (Gen. xlviii. 15)—He goes with him, and never fails or forsakes him (Deut. xxxi. 8). In some lives this haunting sense of the presence and providence of God is peculiarly conspicuous. Take, for example, the story of Joseph. He recognizes that his God can inspire him with the power to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. He acknowledges repeatedly and emphatically the gracious providence that has shaped his mysterious career and brought him through persecution, calumny, and imprisonment to his seat beside the king with its immeasurable opportunity for doing

good. "It was not you that sent me to Egypt," he says to his brothers, "but God. You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8, l. 20). This sense of a providence, of a divine care which watches sleeplessly over the fortunes of the individual and of the nation, is one of the most precious things in the Old Testament, and it appears very early. In both the Jehovist (Gen. xii. 1) and the Elohist (xx. 13) narratives, Abraham's westward "wanderings" are interpreted as due to a divine impulse. It was not accident, but the voice of God that called him. This same Abraham assures his servant, about to set out on his quest for a wife for Isaac, that God will send His angel before him and prosper his way (Gen. xxiv. 7, 40). For our purpose, the age and historicity of these narratives are quite immaterial; they are, in any case, a testimony to the writer's overwhelming faith in a providence that guides and guards the careers of those that are dear to it. It is the same thought that Deuteronomy so persistently reiterates, in its review of the national past (cf. Hos. xi. 1 ff.): "He led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint, and fed thee in the wilderness with manna" (Deut. viii. 15 f.). Such a God deserves to be trusted; but more, He deserves to be loved, and the duty of love to God is urged by Deuteronomy with noble earnestness (vi. 5, xi. 1, etc.). Indeed, it is not so much a duty as the natural human response to the infinite and undeserved (ix. 5) love of God.

This communion with God, which in one aspect is the fear of Him, in another trust in Him and the love of Him, was sustained in ways both public and private —by public worship and private prayer. We gather from the question put to the Shunammite by her

husband that it was the custom to visit the prophet, no doubt for religious instruction and inspiration, on the new moon and sabbath (2 Kings iv. 23). If the prophet was, as he must occasionally have been, a man of the stamp of the great literary prophets, however inferior he might be to them in ability, souls must have been helped and stimulated by such a meeting. The more formal worship of the country sanctuaries, and later at the temple, though exposed to abuses of many and shameful kinds, must have helped to keep alive and bright in many a heart the sense of the goodness of God, manifest alike in the gifts of nature and in the wonders of their national past, with which the festivals were, at least in later times, connected. The religion encouraged by these festivals was, at any rate in the pre-exilic period, a glad religion: "There ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand to, ye and your households" (Deut. xii. 7; cf. Neh. viii. 10).

But the Old Testament knows very well that the communion, which finds its public and formal expression in the worship of the sanctuary, may be gravely imperilled by prosperity, and altogether destroyed by luxury. Many and earnest are the warnings against forgetting Jehovah; and this temptation, it is seen, is one that is peculiarly apt to come upon men "who have eaten and are full, who have built goodly houses and dwelt therein, whose herds and flocks and silver and gold are multiplied" (Deut. viii. 12 f.). Then it is that the heart is apt to be lifted up, "and thou forget Jehovah thy God who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness" (viii. 14 f.; cf. xxxi. 20). It was when Jeshurun waxed fat, grew thick, and sleek, that he forsook the God who had made him and lightly esteemed the rock of his

salvation (xxxii. 15). Here is surely a profound interpretation of the power of prosperity to drive God out of human life, and to disturb that communion which it ought to confirm. For prosperity, although always a menace to the spiritual life, is not necessarily a curse: it only becomes so, if it tempts a man to think or say, "My own power and the might of my own hand hath gotten me this wealth" (viii. 17; cf. Amos vi. 13). But he who remembers that "it is Jehovah thy God that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. viii. 18) may continue in happy communion with his God.

Just as prosperity may lead to forgetfulness of God, so distress may drive men to Him, or deepen in them a sense of His reality (cf. Judges iii. 8 f.). Face to face with perplexity or danger, the appeal to God was natural, and, to an ancient Hebrew, inevitable. Jacob, for example, on his return to his own land, anticipating danger from the brother he had wronged, earnestly prays to be delivered from his hand (Gen. xxxii. 11). Moses, vexed by the murmurs of the people for water, turns and appeals to his God (Exod. xvii. 4), just as David strengthens himself in his God when the people propose to stone him (1 Sam. xxx. 6). Of peculiar interest is the case of Hezekiah who, thrown into consternation by the menace of Assyria, went up to the temple, and offered a fervent prayer for deliverance, after having first spread "before Jehovah"—almost as if Jehovah were bodily present to look and listen—the letter which he had received from the messengers (2 Kings xix. 14 ff.).

Prayer is the natural expression of a vital communion with God. Yet, considering the power which the idea of God exercised over the thoughts and lives of the nobler Hebrews, the prayers in the historical

books of the Old Testament are surprisingly few. This may be explained partly, as we have suggested, by the fact that, as the history is a national one, these books exhibit the men, on the whole, in public rather than in private relationships. But there may be other and deeper reasons. It is at least conceivable that a living faith could express itself in the general attitude and direction of the life, without formally expressing itself in language. This may partly explain the absence of prayer from the story of such a life as Joseph's. Occasions enough there were for it. For long he trod a path of sorrow. He was destitute, afflicted, tormented. It was through a very stern discipline that he was ultimately brought to a wealthy place. He was, too, a man of noble piety, yet it is never said that he prayed. Of course no historian or biographer is bound to report everything and the argument from silence is notoriously precarious. Still the silence is remarkable and perhaps significant. If, however, there is no recorded prayer, there is in its place a mighty sense, as we have seen, of the overshadowing presence and the vigilant providence of God. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The piety of the man, if not, in the record, formally expressed in prayer, is interwoven with his life. It is different in the story of Daniel, whose career was in many ways so similar to that of Joseph. Both narratives are full of dreams and interpretations, the heroes of both were captives and they both rose in the land of their captivity to positions of exceptional honour and influence. But in the story of Daniel prayer and allusions to prayer are frequent. The same great faith in God animates both narratives, but the one expresses itself in prayer, the other does not, and the reason is probably to be sought in the simple fact that the story of Daniel is

about seven centuries later than that of Joseph. During this interval prayer shared in the development which characterized the religion generally. The prayers of the post-exilic period are at once more numerous, more elaborate, and more formal than those of the pre-exilic.

But whether the records attest it or not, we must suppose that prayer was, from the beginning, an integral, if not a prominent part of Hebrew religion; and, even in the earliest records, prayers of all kinds find a place—petitions, thanksgivings, intercessions, confessions—though naturally confessions appear much more frequently in the later period, when stern experience and prophetic teaching had deepened the sense of sin. More or less throughout the Old Testament, but especially in the earlier period, petitions gather round things material—food, drink, raiment, prosperity; "the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine;" deliverance from danger, sickness, and death. Prayers for children are naturally of frequent occurrence. Hannah entreats Jehovah, with prayer and promise, for a son (1 Sam. i. 11), and David beseeches Him with prayer and fasting for the recovery of Bathsheba's sick child (2 Sam. xii. 16). Occasionally there occur unlovely, though not unintelligible prayers for vengeance (of Samson, Judges xvi. 28; of Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 22). There is a quaint and simple beauty about the prayer of Abraham's servant for a prosperous journey: "O Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, send me, I pray Thee, goodspeed this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham," etc. (Gen. xxiv. 12). But it goes without saying that the prayers of men like the Hebrews were not exhausted in petitions like these. Solomon is represented as praying for a wise and understanding heart (1 Kings

iii. 9 f.), and Moses as entreating a vision of the glory of God (Exod. xxxiii. 18), a glory which is at once explained as a revelation of Jehovah's grace.

Communion with God naturally finds expression not only in petition for oneself, but in intercession for others. Samuel regards intercession as part of his duty, the neglect of which would be a sin (1 Sam. xii. 23). It is perhaps, however, not altogether an accident that practically all the intercessory prayers of the Old Testament are offered by prophets. Moses, whom Deuteronomy (xxxiv. 10) regards as Israel's greatest prophet, repeatedly appears in the rôle of intercessor—pleading for the removal of the plagues from Pharaoh, of the leprosy from Miriam (Num. xii. 13), of the serpents from the sinful people (xxi. 7); and he touches almost unparalleled heights of self-sacrificing devotion (cf. Rom. ix. 3) in his prayer for the apostate people: "If Thou wilt forgive their sin . . .; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 32). As the prophet was peculiarly charged with the spiritual welfare of others, so he bore them on his heart before God.

The goodness of God is frequently acknowledged in prayers of gratitude. Abraham's servant blesses God for the successful issue of his journey (Gen. xxiv. 27); thanksgivings are offered for victory in war (Exod., chap. xv.), for the ripening of the fruits of the soil (Deut. xxvi. 5–10), for recovery from sickness (Isa., chap. xxxviii.), for an unexpected turn in the national fortunes (Ezra vii. 27 f.). Nowhere perhaps is the humility of true gratitude expressed with a more exquisite or affecting simplicity than in the prayer of Jacob: "I am not worthy of the least of all the love and faithfulness which Thou hast showed to Thy servant" (Gen. xxxii. 10).

A few brief confessions of sin are found in pre-exilic literature, but the post-exilic confessions are very much longer and more elaborate (Ezra, chap. ix.; Neh., chap. ix.). "Behold, we are before Thee in our guiltiness." "I am ashamed," Ezra confesses, "and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra ix. 6).

In prayers of petition, intercession, thanksgiving, confession, we get a glimpse of the inner side of Hebrew piety. We shall now look briefly at the manner in which it affected conduct. The consciousness of the divine presence is at once a cleansing and an inspiring influence. The cleansing power of the "fear of God" is happily illustrated by the Law of Holiness: "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev., chaps. xvii.–xxvi.). The Hebrew who recognizes his true relation to his God will conform to the highest ethical demands in his relations to society; he will be scrupulously honest, he will be tenderly considerate of the deaf, the blind, the hired servant, he will scorn all intrigue and slander, he will love the stranger and honour the aged (Lev. xix. 9–18). The fear of God keeps Nehemiah (v. 14 f.) from taking an unjust advantage of his official position. It will keep any true man from hardening his heart and shutting his hand against the poor (Deut. xv. 7). It will enable him to abandon, without murmuring, his most cherished hopes (Deut. iii. 26, iv. 22), to accept with meekness the discipline that is sent and the fortune that is allotted (2 Sam. xv. 25 f.), to obey the divine voice though his heart be breaking (Gen., chap. xxii.), to commit his case with quiet hope to God (2 Sam. xvi. 12).

But the sense of the divine presence, besides being a support in sorrow, and a power that searches and

purifies the motives of conduct, is no less an inspiration to the courageous performance of duty. "Be strong and of a good courage. He it is that doth go before thee. He will be with thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deut. xxxi. 8). Jehovah of Hosts, Master of the resources of the universe, can equip His servants for the work which He gives them to do. He is able and willing to endow a poor speaker with the power of ready and effective speech (Exod. iv. 12), and to impart wisdom and understanding to one to whom is committed the high task of administration (1 Kings, chap. iii.). In short, the devout man feels that his life is evermore being "kept," and that a gracious face is shining upon him (Num. vi. 24–26).

It is worthy of note that most of the great figures of Hebrew history, even in the realm of action, are men of prayer: for example, Moses, David, Elijah, Nehemiah. Of the first two we have already spoken. Elijah's titanic energy was sustained, at least in part, on prayer: he prays for the widow's son, he prays in the great scene on Carmel, and elsewhere. But of all the glimpses we get of the prayer life of Old Testament worthies, surely the most delightful is that afforded by the autobiographical memoirs of Nehemiah. He is a true man of action—look at him on his midnight ride round the walls of Jerusalem, or later organizing their restoration and defence (ii. 12–15)—but he is no less a true man of prayer. His plans for Jerusalem are not his own, they are what *my God put into my heart* (ii. 12), and it is his God who puts it into his heart to draw up a list of the burghers of Jerusalem (vii. 5). In such language we breathe the very purest atmosphere of piety: they are the words of a keen and vigorous man whose whole life must have been a conscious walk with God. Up and down his book are scattered prayers, dropped

often quite incidentally into the course of his narrative, that his God would remember him for good (cf. v. 19, xiii. 31). The Persian king, he tells us, granted him permission to return with official authority to Jerusalem, *according to the good hand of my God upon me* (ii. 8); and when he reaches his destination, and, after investigation, proposes to the leading men to restore the walls of Jerusalem, "I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me" (ii. 18). This phrase indeed seems to be characteristic of the piety of the period (cf. Ezra viii. 22, 31). When some influential men jeered at Nehemiah's proposal, he has his answer ready: "The God of heaven, He will prosper us: therefore we His servants will arise and build" (ii. 19 f.). And when those same scoffers, provoked by the rapid progress which the walls were making, began to plan cunning and violent measures to check that progress, "we made our prayer unto God and set a watch against them day and night" (iv. 9). This fine recognition of the necessity of work as well as prayer, and of prayer as well as work, comes out in his appeal to the men whom he has organized for the defence of the city: "Be not afraid of them: *remember the Lord, and fight*" (iv. 14). Here is a man of splendid practical gifts, of deep insight into the needs of a situation, and of large appreciation of the way in which those needs may best be practically met, and the necessary forces organized and kept efficient; but he recognizes no less clearly the indefeasible importance of prayer. He understands the inspiration that religion brings to the man who has difficult or dangerous work to do. He knows that men will fight better for remembering the Lord. He knows all this out of his own experience. All his activities are rooted in God: all his life is sustained by the inspiring and sheltering sense of God's

presence: "Remember me, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy loving kindness" (xiii. 22). Nowhere does this receive so remarkable expression as in the story of his interview with the Persian king, from whom he wishes to beg a favour which is likely to have far-reaching effects upon the welfare of his dear distant home-land. The king asked him what was the nature of his request. "*So I prayed to the God of heaven,* and I said to the king, etc." (ii. 4 f.). This swift, silent, unrecorded prayer for help which he sends up to heaven before venturing upon an answer is a most eloquent testimony to the atmosphere and quality of his life: surely such a man lived in the Presence. One is involuntarily reminded of the later promise, fulfilled already by anticipation in such a man as Nehemiah: "Be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye" (Mark xiii. 11).

These charming memoirs, with their straightforward, soldier-like statements, and their simple, open-hearted confessions are of inestimable value as a first-hand utterance of the faith—alike on its practical and its devotional side—of one of Israel's great historical figures; and they deepen our regret that the Old Testament has no other quite similar document to offer. What would we not give for such a memoir from the hand of one of the martyrs who fell in the persecution of Manasseh, when the streets of Jerusalem ran with "innocent blood very much" (2 Kings xxi. 16)? The Psalms, it may be said, supply this lack of autobiographical memoirs in the historical books. In part they do; but the clue to the historical origin and setting of a psalm is so seldom recoverable that we have to content ourselves, in the main, with the revelation it affords of the

Psalmist's religious experience and spiritual temper. This is much, but it is not everything. The concrete details of an important historical situation, the glowing faith which enabled a man to move among those details with sovereign ease and authority, and the story of all this in the man's own words—these things are peculiarly welcome and precious. We have not the intimate knowledge we might desire of the great leaders of the Hebrew people; but enough remains to show that, whatever form their work may have taken, they were men who stayed their souls on God.

X

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE BIBLE [1]

III. IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

In the two preceding chapters we saw the difficulties of illustrating the idea of Communion with God on the basis of the prophetical and historical books of the Old Testament. The prophets, speaking as they do to men for God rather than to God for men, seldom let us look directly into their inner experience. The figures that move before us on the pages of the historical books are presented rather in their public than in their private relationships. They are national figures and we are told rather what they did than what they were. In the Psalms, however, we have, in its simplest and most natural form, the thing of which we are in search. There men have poured out their hot hearts to God. Heights of joy, depths of penitence and anguish, resolution and failure, thanksgiving and confession, every experience of the soul is here anticipated, expressed, and, above all, related to God, in whom alone the weak found their refuge and strength, and in whose light men saw the mysteries of human life, if not with perfect clearness, yet clearly enough to fill their hearts with quietness and confidence. Johann Arndt, the German mystic, well said: "What the heart is in man, that is the Psalter in the Bible." Here are the prayers that teach us to pray, the songs on which men and nations have modelled their praises,

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

the confessions that inspire and express our penitence. In the Hebrew Psalter the human spirit, in all the chequered possibilities of its experience, lies in the presence of its God. There is no mood, whether of sorrow, struggle, or triumph, which does not here find its reflex and expression. The range of its sympathy has made it the comfort of men in persecution, their inspiration in the struggle with foes within and without, the hope and stay of their dying hours.

Here, however, as everywhere in the Old Testament, problems many and difficult arise, which have to be faced and appreciated before we can move over the ground with any real confidence. Of these we shall mention only two—those affecting (1) the speaker in the Psalms, and (2) their historic origin.

1. It is natural to suppose that the speaker, when he calls himself "I" or "me," is an individual. Obviously, however, this cannot always be the case. In Psalm cxxix. 1, for example,

> "Much have they afflicted *me* from my youth up,
> Let *Israel* now say,"

the reference must necessarily be a national or collective one. Smend, in his famous essay which appeared in 1888 in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, "On the 'I' in the Psalms," sought to carry this interpretation practically throughout the whole Psalter. Since then the pendulum has swung, notably in the commentary of Duhm, to the other extreme. It could not be justly argued that this is altogether a question of no importance, for sometimes the difference in the resultant interpretation will be profound, according as we believe the speaker to be an individual or the nation. Take, for example, the great confession of faith toward the close of the sixteenth psalm:

"Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol,
Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy loving one to see the pit."

Even on the individual interpretation, the meaning is not beyond doubt. The speaker may be expressing his confidence in his recovery from a severe illness —though this seems too meagre a meaning for the large drift of the psalm—but it is quite possible that he is expressing his faith in a life beyond the grave. On the collective interpretation nothing more would be implied than faith in the continued existence of Israel. It is all the difference between national and individual immortality, and therefore the question of the "I" cannot be said to be unimportant. At the same time it would be easy to exaggerate its importance. A psalm, though sung by the Church, is at any rate written by an individual, and in the first instance expresses *his* feelings and faith; indeed it must do that before it can express theirs. So from this point of view, the question of who the speaker is does not greatly matter; least of all when we remember that though, in post-exilic times, the corporate ecclesiastical consciousness was keen, so also was the individual consciousness, and consequently the individual interpretation of the Psalms cannot in any case be greatly wide of the mark. The penitence, for example, which a psalm expresses must first have been experienced by the individual conscience before it took the form of a psalm to be sung by the united Church.

2. Again, it is hardly ever possible to ascertain, with any precision, the origin and authorship of a psalm. Often we may feel sure that it was born out of a very definite historical situation; but in the long course of a history of which we know so comparatively little as that of Israel, many possibilities present themselves, and we have to be content with

conjectures of more or less probability. Psalms xliv. and lxxix., for example, are a vivid transcript of a dreadful experience—when the temple was defiled, the city in ruins, the blood of the saints poured out like water, the dead exposed to beasts and birds. Most scholars assign these Psalms to the awful days of Antiochus Epiphanes, but even this is not certain. The very uncertainty of the historical origin of the Psalms is, however, while in some ways to be regretted, in other ways a gain. It lifts them into a region of universal applicability. Like all true lyric poetry, the Psalms seize the essential element in a situation, dropping all that is adventitious; therefore, though they seldom throw any light upon the history, they are immortal revelations of the human spirit in its most sincere and searching experiences; and it is partly to the fact that they are so rarely specific in the historical sense that they owe their undying power. Where they are specific they have naturally been most appreciated by those whose historical situation was like that of the writers and earliest singers. We can imagine, for example, the power of Ps. lxxvi., sung by the Scottish covenanters before a battle, as described by Scott in *Old Mortality*:

> "When Thy rebuke, O Jacob's God,
> Had forth against them past,
> Their horses and their chariots both
> Were in a deep sleep cast."

The people of the Reformation, too, must have felt the thrill of many a psalm; and no age can have felt it more than our own, in the experiences of these last heart-rending years. But where the psalmists speak from the level of life's average struggles and sorrows, they appeal to the universal heart.

The Hebrew name for the Psalter is the Book of

Praises. Throughout it, with hardly an exception, there is an undertone of either hope or praise; and some of its noblest songs are altogether songs of praise. At the same time, the Hebrew life which forms the background of the Psalter and against which the glorious fact of God stands out so radiantly, was, for the most part, a life of conflict and pain. Many of the psalmists were men of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Behind and before they are beset by enemies, whose dark presence is felt even in the quietest and most trustful psalms (cf. Ps. xxiii. 5). Through those enemies the heart of the psalmists was often made sore, and their life was sometimes in peril. The enemies are men of violence and arrogance, with cunning dispositions, sharp tongues, and sometimes swords as sharp. To the psalmists, both the commoner and the rarer tragedies of life are familiar. They know the pang of kindness rejected and friendship betrayed (xli. 9, lv. 12–14). They know the vanity of human help. They have faced, though with faith and good hope, the mystery of life, and felt it at times to be fleeting and empty, like a breath or a phantom (xxxix. 5, 6), frail as a dream or a wild flower (Ps. xc.). The writer of Psalm xc., that great hymn of eternity, was profoundly impressed by the pathos of it all—the inexorable passing of the generations, the blight of sin, the going down to the grave with one's work unaccomplished. To him life seems ruthlessly swept away by the uncontrollable floods of time. It is like a sleep; like a bird that flies away and is seen no more; like a sigh, brief and lost for ever, wrung from a heavily laden heart. At the end of it lies the grave, where, for many of the psalmists, there is no more remembrance of God, and they can give Him no more thanks for ever.

So whether we consider the inherent pathos and

frailty of life, or the fierceness with which it is assailed by foes from without, it is to most of the psalmists a valley of deep shadow, though the gloom is pierced by a mild yet steady light, which sometimes shines so brightly as to chase it all away. But often the shadow is very deep indeed.

> "My life is spent with sorrow,
> And my years with sighing" (xxxi. 10)—

that is the burden of many a psalmist's song. "Many are they that rise up against me" (iii. 1). It is tear-stained faces that look in the night for the joy that cometh in the morning (xxx. 5). Sometimes the writers grow hot and indignant at the unexplained anomalies of the moral world, sometimes they are driven by them into temporary scepticism, so that their feet had almost gone, and their steps had well-nigh slipped (lxxiii. 2).

But more real even than these facts that distress and vex them is the infinite fact of God. They are at the worst but temporary; but He was before them and He will be after them. They perish, but He endures, ever the same, and His years know no end. And no great impersonal force is He, but a Father who pities His children (ciii. 13), a Friend who loves and listens to His human friends. We are so familiar with the language of the Psalms that it is hard for us to realize the wonder of it, the naturalness, the passion, the naïveté, we had almost said, with which they appeal to Him to help them, to arise, to awake for them, to hide them, and to watch over them.

> "Forsake me not, O Jehovah:
> O my God, be not far from me" (xxxviii. 21).

They are persons, so is He. "*Thou* art with *me*"

(xxiii. 4). Here, and everywhere throughout the Psalter, two persons face each other—the divine and the human; and this living sense of the personality of God is the sublime glory of the Psalter. He is as real to those who trust Him as the mountains that are round about Jerusalem (cxxv. 2), only more stable and mighty than they. They might be torn up by the roots and flung into the sea, but He would even then be a refuge (xlvi. 1 f.), inspiring His people with a strength and a calmness like His own.

This fact of God and of His reality to the psalmists, familiar as it is, sometimes comes upon the reader with overwhelming power; and to the man who passionately believes it every situation is by it transformed. Take, for example, Psalm xi. There the situation is desperate enough. Society is being shaken to its foundations, its pillars are trembling, the best are despondent or despairing. The worst are working untrammelled their cruel will, and flight seems the only wisdom. But there is one brave, strong man who amid the confusion and despair stands firm as a rock. He sees the danger, but he also sees his God. From the danger on earth he lifts up his eyes to the heavens, to Jehovah, who from His throne is carefully watching it all, and who will one day punish the wicked, and reward the good with a vision of His gracious face. Or take Psalm xci., that most daring expression of optimism in the Psalter. To its writer the world was thick-set with perils, peopled by demons who haunted every hour of the day and night, by forces that smote men down by the thousand and ten thousand. Upon its roads were stones over which the weary pilgrim feet might stumble; in its secret places lurked serpents and wild beasts. But the eye of faith sees angels to match the demons—angels who gently lift the pilgrim over the rough places of

the way; and above all, the psalmist sees very plainly One of whom he can say, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Sometimes indeed through their blinding tears the psalmists cannot see God (lxxiii. 13), but in happier moods, and sometimes even in their sorrow, they feel themselves overwhelmed by a sense of that justice and goodness of God, which are all the day. Indeed, nothing in the universe is so stupendous as these facts, which are comparable only to the mightiest things in the world—the mountains and the great sea.

> "O Jehovah, Thy love is in the heavens,
> Thy faithfulness reacheth to the skies,
> Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God,
> Thy judgments are a great deep" (xxxvi. 5 f.).

The whole earth is full of the loving-kindness of Jehovah (xxxiii. 5), and if one would learn how good He is, one has only to taste and see (xxxiv. 8).

Such then is the God to whom the psalmists pray; and so real, so personal is He, that their address to Him never meanders into abstractions, it has all the glow and colour of a passionate personal relationship. The psalmists are not so much concerned to assert that God is everywhere, but that He is *here*—not only with the world at large, but with *them* and where *they* are. "God with *us*"—that is their motto. Yet surely no one ever thought of God in His larger relationships more impressively than they. They were overwhelmed, as completely as any man has ever been, by the thought of God's infinity, of His eternity, of His omnipresence; but they have the genius to express these thoughts in language that falls within the comprehension of a little child. They show Him sitting as King at the Flood, and sitting as King for ever (xxix. 10) as enduring when the heavens are no

more (cii. 26), as existing from the unthinkable past, on through the life of mountains and men, to the unimaginable future (Ps. xc.). They do not say that He is omnipresent, but they say with a more convincing simplicity that there is no place in which we can escape His spirit, or evade His presence—that high in heaven, or deep in Sheol, or far away in the uttermost parts of the sea, He is there (cxxxix. 7–9).

Anywhere, then, it will be possible for the devout soul to commune with such a God. All nature is the work of His hand, and a shining symbol of His presence. The psalmists "see Him," as Fr. Naumann has said, "come over the mountains—in the snow, in the rain, in the sunshine." The starry sky (Ps. viii.), the splendid sun (Ps. xix.), the great wide sea (civ. 25), the bubbling fountains, the grassy fields, the stately trees (civ. 10–17)—in the presence of these things the psalmists feel that they are in His own presence. Yet there is a nearer fellowship than that. At best those things but declare His glory (xix. 1), but not His will for men. That is revealed for them in two ways apart from the revelation that came to them in the musings of their own hearts, namely, in history and in Scripture. On the field of history the mysterious purpose of God may be learned—that purpose which in its essence is love (Ps. cxxxvi.), though human obstinacy has often compelled it to show itself as severity. It is because God is present in history that faith can reinforce itself by thinking of the days of old (cxliii. 5), and the sense of God and His goodness is kept alive partly by the tradition that passes on through the ages from father to son.

> "We have heard with our ears, O God,
> Our fathers have told us
> What work Thou didst in their days,
> In the days of old" (xliv. 1; cf. xlviii. 13).

But the divine will which was written in letters of fire on the pages of history, was written more gently but not less plainly in Scripture, which embraced certainly the Pentateuch, possibly also parts of the historical and prophetical books. This was God's unique gift to Israel (cxlvii. 19 f.), and its praises are sung in language of quiet rapture (Ps. cxix., xix. 7–11).

In Jerusalem, which was regarded as, in a special sense, Jehovah's earthly home, "the city of the great King" (xlviii. 2), and more particularly in the temple, did the true Jew feel himself to be peculiarly near his God. Specially blessed were those who dwelt in His house and praised Him evermore (lxxxiv. 4): it is there that they behold the beauty of Jehovah (xxvii. 4), and their hearts fill with simple joy when someone proposes a pilgrimage to the holy city, to take part in the stately worship of the temple they loved so well (Ps. cxxii.). Naturally, communion with God, besides being sustained in these ways—by the contemplation of nature, by meditation upon history, by the study of Scripture, and by participation in public worship—was sustained most powerfully of all by prayer. Besides the express testimony of lv. 17, that prayer was offered three times a day, the whole Psalter is an eloquent testimony to the place and power of prayer in the life of the devout Hebrew.

Communion with God, while it may be realized with special vividness in sorrow—for He "healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds" (cxlvii. 3)—is interrupted by sin. Unforgiven sin creates a paralyzing sense of condemnation and prostration (cxxx. 3, cxliii. 2), and there can be no health or happiness for the soul until sin is sincerely confessed. Then God, who has both the will and the

power to redeem (cxxx. 7 f.), will compass the penitent about with forgiveness and love (Ps. xxxii.), and the old glad relationship will be restored.

With such a God to worship—one who, though Lord of the heavens and the earth, yet enters with His power and pity into the experiences of the individual soul—the passion of the Psalter is very explicable. Its writers long for Him as the hart pants for the water-brooks, and when He seems to stand afar off, it is as if the light of the world had gone out. But their hearts are never long without a witness to Him. Even when He seems to have forsaken them (xxii. 1), it is *He* who has forsaken them. He is still somewhere, the great unshaken Fact, the patient and affectionate Person, who in His own way, which is not our way, and in His own time, which is not our time, will deliver His poor servant out of the jaws of the ravening and roaring lion. Under the shadow of His wings those who trust Him may rest with quietness and confidence, in the assurance that His tender mercies are over all His works.

With quietness and confidence: for the lesson taught by Isaiah (xxx. 15) and rejected with derision by his contemporaries, had at length sunk deep into the Hebrew mind. It is beautiful to watch the sublime confidence with which men commit their spirits into the divine hands (xxxi. 5) and though beset by dangers lie quietly down in sleep, with the assurance that their God will sustain them (iii. 5, iv. 8). The power of the presence of God to drive out fear—illustrated already in the experience of the prophets and of Israel's great historical figures—is confirmed by many a word of the Psalter.

> "In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid:
> What can flesh do unto me?" (lvi. 4).

" Jehovah is on my side ; I will not fear ;
What can man do unto me ? " (cxviii. 6).

And in ever-memorable words :

" Though I walk through the valley of the deep shadow,
I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me " (xxiii. 4).

Therefore over even a very troubled life may brood an atmosphere of sweetest peace. Some expressions of this gentle confidence in God, especially in the group known as the Pilgrim Psalms (Ps. cxx.–cxxxiv.), are touched with singular beauty. What could be finer, for example, than this :

" Unto Thee do I lift up mine eyes,
O Thou that sittest in the heavens.
Behold, as the eyes of servants to the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
So are our eyes toward Jehovah our God,
Until He have mercy upon us " (cxxiii. 1 f.) ;

or this :

" Jehovah, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty,
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother ;
Like a weaned child is my soul " (cxxxi. 1 f.) ?

The spirit of devout humility and tender resignation has surely received its final expression in these two brief and beautiful songs. In the same group is a psalm which reminds us that it is not with feverish activity but in silence and with quiet trust that the finest gifts are won and the mightiest things achieved.

" It is vain for you to rise up early,
To take rest late,
To eat the bread of toil ;
For He giveth to His beloved in sleep " (cxxvii. 2).

With the Old Testament generally, most of the Psalms are limited in their outlook to this world. This explains the materialism, the impatience, the imprecations, the demand for speedy vindication which characterizes not a few of them. But though with their limited outlook upon another world, they are eager and all but clamorous to have their wrongs righted and their cause vindicated in this, and though the blessings for which they pray are often of a material sort, there are many who have mounted to the higher uplands of the spiritual life and whose dearest satisfaction is to have the gracious face of God shining upon them (iv. 6).

The transition from the one mood to the other receives its most brilliant illustration in Psalm lxxiii. Here is a man who had been provoked and disheartened by the success of wickedness. It was those who denied and defied God that were sleek and prosperous; while he with his clean and scrupulous life had been hurled to the wall. Verily if the service of God brought no better reward than that, it was hardly worth while; and the Psalmist's faith began to slip away from him. But one day the secret of it all was revealed to him —the fearful end of the sinner, and the good man's unbroken fellowship with God. Despite persecution and earthly failure, "As for me, I am *continually* with thee." This is one of the very greatest words of the Old Testament. Another psalmist, vexed by the same problem, had comforted himself with the thought that at death God would take him to Himself (xlix. 15). This psalmist's solution is much profounder, for it is not postponed to the world beyond. He finds peace and fellowship on this side of the grave as well as on the other. He, too, believes that at death God will take him; but he is no less sure that, in this world, God is holding him by the

right hand, and guiding him across the pilgrimage of life. So, despite all seeming, he is continually with God, God is continually with him. He has nothing but God, but God is everything; and with Him—even amid distress and defeat—he is content. Heart and flesh may fail, but God is his portion for ever.

XI

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE BIBLE [1]

IV. IN CHRIST

The same difficulties that we found to beset the attempt to estimate the piety of the Old Testament upon its inner side, confront us also in the New. And for the same reason. The life of the Christian and of the Hebrew saint alike is rooted indeed in faith, but that faith expresses itself largely in social relationships and activities. When Jesus was asked by an earnest man the way of eternal life, He pointed him to those commandments in the Decalogue which emphasized the duties of men to society. The secret sources of the life are seldom laid bare. Much may be inferred with certainty, but little is directly said. Considering the vivid apprehension of God and of the spiritual life which pervades the New Testament, its recorded prayers are astonishingly few. This, it may be said, is due to its subject-matter: narratives and letters give little scope for prayer. Still, this is only a partial explanation; the fact remains that even the recorded prayers of Jesus are very few, and, apart from the Gospel of John, very brief. He himself had bidden men, when they prayed, to enter into the chamber and shut the door; what took place behind the closed door was an affair between the soul and God.

It is, however, of peculiar importance to ascertain,

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

so far as we may, the nature of the communion of Christ with God; for, in some sense at least, He must be the norm as well as the dynamic of the Christian consciousness. If it is true that He brings us into relations with the Father which are impossible without Him and apart from Him, it is also true that His own relation to the Father is the perfect type of that toward which we strive, however unsuccessfully, to conform. But while we study the inner life of Jesus with the hope of meeting much which we may reproduce, however imperfectly, in our own lives, we shall never even begin to understand His secret until we recognize that, in the profoundest sense, He stands absolutely alone, and no other son of man can be placed by His side. He is like us, so like us that we feel He is our best and deepest self; but He is unlike us—identified with God as no other ever has been or can be. There is a sense in which our communion with God may be like His: there is another sense in which His communion with God is without parallel. Men may be sons of God, He is *the* Son. So much more intimate was His relationship with the Father than any other man's can be that God can be addressed as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our familiarity with this phrase is apt to blind us to its astonishing implications. It may be considered to have a remote parallel in the Old Testament addresses to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at least in so far as it contemplates God in relation to a historical personality; yet it is something widely different and deeper. It is no doubt a subtle reminiscence of Jesus' own method of prayer: for was it not He pre-eminently who had called God Father? But further, it is a most remarkable tribute to His uniqueness that Paul thus calls Him the Father of Jesus. It suggests that this new relation to God, which involved nothing

less than a spiritual revolution, had been created and mediated by Jesus. It suggests the infinite obligation of all men to Jesus for the assurance of this new relationship.

The hottest battle in the modern theological world rages round this very point of the uniqueness of Jesus. It was natural that the historical criticism which had succeeded in explaining so much, both in Old Testament and New, by its wide and ever-widening knowledge of contemporary and antecedent historical conditions, should imagine that Jesus could also in this way be adequately explained. Many parallels to His sayings and doings could be adduced from many quarters, and the larger our knowledge grew, the more the mystery of His personality seemed to vanish. His miracles and His claims might seem to offer an intractable residuum, but even they could be disposed of. Some of the miracles might be simply imitations of miracles associated with Old Testament saints, others due to misunderstood metaphors, others to the almost unconscious devices of an affectionate and pious imagination: many of the healing miracles were allowed right-of-way, simply because parallels could be adduced from modern medical experience. The claims of Jesus might be disposed of with equal facility. They are not claims, it is urged, made by Jesus for Himself, but claims made for Him in later days by a Church which loved, revered, and worshipped Him. In this way Jesus is skilfully reduced to common human measure, and He stands before us great indeed, but only the greatest among the sons of men. He is head and shoulders above the people, but that is all.

Now no intelligent man would wish to underestimate the difficulties connected with the interpretation of an ancient literature, necessarily steeped

in conceptions remote from the modern mind; least of all, when to those inevitable difficulties are added others which spring out of the intricacies and perplexities of the synoptic problem. Still it has to be confessed that much which passes for criticism comes to its estimate of Jesus with its mind made up. Certain kinds of evidence are more or less deliberately ruled out, simply because the Figure to which they point would be of more than human proportions. This is seldom indeed the avowed basis of the reconstruction, but it is frequently the tacit assumption; and there is just enough in the variety and divergences of the narratives themselves to lend a certain plausibility to results reached from this presupposition. But there are not wanting signs that a more cautious and comprehensive criticism will soon demand a hearing—a criticism not less historical but more spiritual; not less ready to test evidence, but more sympathetic to what one might call uncongenial evidence; more willing to recognize that behind a literature so unique as the New Testament and so unanimous in its testimony to Jesus Christ, must lie a Personality no less unique than Jesus Christ as attested by that New Testament.

This is not the place to deal with the literary and critical aspects of this problem; but it is the writer's conviction that an unprejudiced investigation can only lead to the conclusion that Jesus stands alone among men, that toward God on the one hand and man on the other He sustains relations which are altogether unique. The uniqueness of Jesus is asserted with special emphasis and frequency in the Fourth Gospel; but if this testimony is rejected as unhistorical and inconclusive, that uniqueness is just as integrally, if not as obviously, interwoven with the Synoptic Gospels. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus claims to be the

Light of the World. the Resurrection and the Life, the Way and the Truth, etc.—claims which, it may be said, do not suggest the historical Jesus; but in the Synoptic Gospels, He claims to forgive sins, to have come to seek and save the lost, to give His life a ransom for many, to be the final Judge of men. The one set of claims is really as stupendous as the other; and if both be ignored as later interpretations of the Church rather than express declarations of Jesus Himself, the question still remains: Who and what is this Man for whom, with any sort of propriety, such claims could be made at all? The felt necessity for such an extraordinary interpretation surely points to an extraordinary man—a man literally extraordinary, *out of the line* of other men, a man by himself, alone.

The interest of this consideration for our discussion lies here: that, if all this be true, the filial consciousness of Jesus was different, in some real way, from the filial consciousness of other men, and communion with God must have been for Him what it never has been for any other member of the race. We have not the space here to argue this: it will be enough to recall certain words and situations which can be vindicated at the bar of literary and historical criticism, and which irresistibly suggest the uniqueness of Jesus. Of these the most notable is this: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." There Jesus claims to sustain a special relation alike to God and man. He is the Son, as no other man can be; all things connected with the revelation of the Father have been deliberately committed by the Father to Him; and for their knowledge of the Father

men are dependent on Him. He is Revealer and Mediator, in both capacities supreme—not one among the many sons of God, but conscious of standing in a unique relation to Him, and therefore to them.

This consciousness shines out from not a few of the sayings of Jesus. "Everyone who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Here again is the same unique relation to the Father—in a special sense He is *His* father—and the same unique relation to men; the ultimate destiny of men at the hands of the Father is to be determined by their attitude to Jesus. Similarly in the great judgment scene toward the close of the Sermon on the Mount, it is to Him, as Judge, that men direct their final appeal, and He who bids the evildoers depart from Him. There can be little doubt that Jesus left upon the minds of His followers the impression that He was to be the Judge of men. Again the wise man is he who builds upon His words, the fool is he who rejects them, and the life that rejects them is ruined. There are other sayings hardly less astonishing, through which Jesus expresses His consciousness of a unique relation to men. "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). Even allowing for editorial expansion in the relationships enumerated in this verse, there is a certain originality about it which marks it essentially as a word of Jesus. It is easy to see that offence might readily be taken at a statement so extreme, and in Matthew x. 37 the thought is expressed more mildly: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." But

Jesus is a perpetual surprise; and the word *hate*, daring and impossible as it may seem, is altogether in His original manner. We cannot of course suppose that He who enjoined the love of enemies, demanded from His disciples that they should literally hate their nearest and dearest; the word is but an extreme expression for the unflinching severity with which a would-be disciple must contemplate any tie that held him back from whole-hearted allegiance to Jesus. But even so, what a claim it is on the part of Jesus! For His sake men must be prepared to abandon everyone, everything. *For My sake.* This phrase appears in the most striking connections. For His sake men are to be ready and even glad to face danger, persecution, death. His cause is identical with the cause of the kingdom of God; what they suffer for it they suffer for Him.

This unique relation of Jesus to men is, as we have said, only the correlative of His unique relation to God, and therefore His communion with God must have been of altogether peculiar and unparalleled intimacy. In this connection it is very significant that there is never any note of contrition in the prayers of Jesus. He confesses nothing because He has nothing to confess. The Lord's Prayer, with its petition for forgiveness, is rather the disciples' prayer than His own. "When *ye* pray, say, 'Forgive us our sins'" (Luke xi. 2–4); but He did not so pray. The uniqueness of the intimacy subsisting between Jesus and the Father is especially marked in the baptism. His filial consciousness had no doubt a much earlier origin, though it is impossible to say when it began; but in that supreme hour when it fell to Him to emerge from the solitude of His private life and to enter, by a deeply solemn and significant act, upon His public career, there came to Him the

divine reassurance that He was indeed not only one among many sons, but the beloved Son, with whom God was well pleased—the divine certainty that He was indeed the King and the Servant of whom psalmist and prophet had sung.

We have considered, all too briefly, that aspect of the inner life of Jesus in which He stands alone: let us look now at such aspects of that life as more nearly touch our own. An examination of the prayer life of Jesus reveals the interesting fact that nearly all His recorded prayers are connected with crises in His mission. Doubtless His whole public ministry was rooted and grounded in private prayer, and His dying prayer, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," was the prayer of all His life. But it is natural that most of the recorded prayers or allusions to prayer are connected with occasions of special importance. Before He chose the Twelve, for example, "He went out into the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God." His earnest prayer which lasted "all night" is very explicable and very significant, when we consider that, humanly speaking, the whole future history of the kingdom of God upon earth depended upon His choice of these men. Similarly, all the great crises of His ministry are accompanied by prayer—the baptism, the confession of His messiahship at Cæsarea Philippi, the agony of the garden, and the cross. "Now it came to pass," says Luke (iii. 21 f.), "when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized *and praying*, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him." And again, "*as He was praying* apart, the disciples were with Him; and He asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am?" (Luke ix. 18). It was necessary that the right moment should be chosen for this confession, and on this point He

must have the clearness and certainty which only His Father could give Him. Probably, too, His miraculous acts of healing were accompanied by prayer. It was "after looking up to heaven" that He spoke the emancipating word to the man who had been deaf and dumb. The spirit that possessed the epileptic boy at the foot of the mountain could only be cast out by prayer. All that concerned His life-work Jesus committed in prayer into His Father's hands. Often, too, we note that He is said to have spent the night in prayer after a day with the multitude. For example, in the morning of the day after He had "healed many that were sick with divers diseases, a great while before day He rose up and went out and departed into a desert place and there prayed." The strength which the work of the day had exhausted had to be recovered before facing the demands of another day; and this could best be done in the silence of the night and in quiet communion with His Father.

Confession, as we have seen, plays no part in the prayers of Jesus; but thanksgiving, intercession, and petition must have abounded. One signal difference, speaking generally, between Old Testament prayer and New, is that in the former petition predominates; in the latter, thanksgiving. This note of gratitude, which rose so naturally to the lips of men when they thought of the "unspeakable gift," was in reality caught from Jesus Himself. "I thank Thee, Father" —some of His recorded prayers and no doubt many of those unrecorded thus began. He offered thanks before feeding the multitude. He offered thanks because the revelation of the Father was given to the childlike of heart. Alike over earthly things and heavenly, over the bread that perisheth and the mystery of the divine will, Jesus rejoiced, and for

them He thanked His Father. The few allusions to intercessory prayer give us a glimpse into the great pleading heart of Jesus, who knew our frailties, bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Most wonderful of all is His prayer for His tormentors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In his hour of keenest agony, He obeys the law which He had enjoined upon His disciples—to pray for those who abused and persecuted them. And He who interceded for cruel enemies would naturally intercede for frail friends; so we find Him praying for Peter that his faith fail not, and—in John—praying for all His disciples, that they might be preserved from the evil one and sanctified in the truth; and not for the disciples only, but for all who through them should be led to believe in Him.

The petition which embraces all others, and which must have been always in the mind of Jesus and frequently upon His lips, is "Thy will be done." But this was quite consistent with specific requests, and even with prayer for material things. There is no strained or unnatural idealism in the teaching of Jesus. He frankly recognized the material substrate of our life, and did not exclude it from the sphere of prayer. He taught His disciples to pray for their daily bread, and He Himself prayed in the hour of His agony that the cup might pass from Him, thus legitimating prayer for material blessings and the alleviation of misery, and also for deliverance from distress. But infinitely deeper than the longing for deliverance was the desire that the divine will be done. "Not My will, but Thine be done." In the awful agony of Gethsemane Jesus prayed that the way might not be so terrible; but, through and above all, that the will of God be done. His desire was that the Father should be glorified through His perfect obedience and sub-

mission. Once indeed it would seem as if Jesus' sustaining consciousness of fellowship with the Father was momentarily clouded. In the anguish of the cross, He meekly asks His God, in the words of an ancient psalm, why He had forsaken Him. Yet this very question, wrung as it were from the very deepest depths of sorrow, shows that even then He felt Himself not utterly forsaken; He could still say *My* God. And afterward the old triumphal filial consciousness reasserted itself; and, the feeling of abandonment now gone, He commended His spirit into His Father's hands.

There is no better index, within brief compass, to Jesus' conception of what is involved in communion with God, than the Lord's Prayer. True, as we have seen, it is in a sense our prayer rather than His: yet it also illustrates with singular comprehensiveness, simplicity, and power, His own attitude to God. It begins characteristically by addressing God simply as "Our Father," thus suggesting not so much His power as His affection for us His children, and reminding us of our common brotherhood to each other through our common sonship to Him. In calling Him the Father *in heaven*, the heart is touched to reverence and awe, as it thinks of this Father as infinitely high above the children who cry to Him —high as the heaven is above the earth. The prayer for the hallowing of His name is more comprehensive than it seems to one unfamiliar with the language of the East. The name covers everything connected with the being and character of God, and all this must be had in holiest reverence. He must be thought of and spoken of worthily. It is not only profanity that is implicitly rebuked in this petition, but every kind of levity in religious things—vulgarity, thoughtlessness, indifference, irreverence. The petition for

the coming of the kingdom of God could hardly fail to find a place in the prayer of One who came to proclaim that kingdom and to usher it in. In its essence, that kingdom was moral and spiritual—as Paul says, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. That petition looks out upon a day, when, under the acknowledged kingship of God, all the interests and ambitions of men will be controlled by the necessities of the kingdom. But over all and in all the will of God must be supreme, and the petition that the divine will be done is in a sense the climax of the earlier part of the prayer. How simple, yet how sublime and searching these capacious phrases are! We think of the divine will as fulfilled upon the great arena of history; we think of it also as done within the compass of the individual soul. These two thoughts—the kingdom and the man—were ever present to the mind of Jesus. The sublimest illustration of this prayer for the triumph of the will of God is Jesus' own petition in Gethsemane: "Not My will, but Thine be done."

From the contemplation of the divine kingdom and the divine will, we turn in the fourth petition to the needs and frailties of men. The prayer, "Give us our daily bread," is a recognition, as welcome as it is simple, of the material basis of human life. It is not a prayer for prosperity, still less for luxury, but simply for that which makes life possible, and even that simply for the day: the prayer is so worded as to encourage in us a sense of continual dependence upon God. But man needs forgiveness as well as bread; there can be no deep happiness for him, no true life at all, unless there is reconciliation with the Father; and forgiveness—we are reminded—is only possible to the man who is willing to forgive. We need further not only forgiveness for the past, but preservation from the perils into which the tempta-

tions of the future and our own evil nature will bring us. Hence the pathetic appeal for deliverance from evil—that terrible force in human life which thwarts the Father and the establishing of His kingdom and the doing of His will.

Thus the Lord's Prayer is a beautiful mirror of the consciousness of Jesus in its relation to God and to human life. Despite the peculiar intimacy of His communion with the Father, He too, knew of that conflict with temptation, which forms the theme of the closing petitions. His temptations were not ignoble like ours, but they were real. He feels the force of it when Peter would fain divert Him from the stern path which God had ordained for Him. The story of the Temptation probably summarizes many experiences which came to Him in the prosecution of His divinely-appointed work. Everywhere there was a Satan who had to be faced and fought; and that story suggests that some of the weapons Jesus used in the fray were drawn from the armoury of Old Testament Scripture. It was with three of its great words that He repelled the temptations that came to Him as He solemnly faced His Messianic work: it was in its words that He opened and vindicated His ministry; it was in words borrowed from it that He instituted the Supper which commemorates His death; and in its words finally that He commended His spirit into His Father's hands. Jesus' communion with God was unquestionably nourished and sustained in part by loving communion, through the Scriptures, with those of His people to whom God had already spoken in the olden time. It is also significant that, for His communion with God, Jesus sought and loved the lonely places. The street corners He left to the hypocrites. His own haunts were the deserts and the mountains. Over and over again this point is

made. "After He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when even was come, He was there alone" (Matt. xiv. 23). "In those days He went out into the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12). It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Jesus inculcates the duty of secrecy in the offices of devotion. The presence of others tends to be a peril. The Father seeth in secret; therefore, "when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber and *shut the door.*"

The unique communion which Jesus enjoyed with the Father expressed itself in a unique sense of power, serenity and certainty, as He prosecuted His divine mission among men. Everyone was struck by the authority with which He spoke and acted; power radiated from Him. And His mighty work was done in an atmosphere of complete serenity. However cunning His opponents, however skilfully their traps are laid, however dangerous or critical the situation, however timid or perplexed those nearest to Him may be, there is never any embarrassment or perplexity in Him. With swift and unerring intuition He sees the thing that must be done, the word that must be said. Though His public career was crowded with incidents of the most testing and baffling kind, He has never to regret or retract. He moves serenely upon His royal way in all the security of an unclouded communion with His Father in heaven—not as one who believes, but as one who knows.

XII

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE BIBLE [1]

V. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The place of Christ in the New Testament, were it not so familiar, would seem to us nothing less than astonishing. Undoubtedly those Jews gravely exaggerate who maintain that, for the Christians, Christ has displaced God; He has revealed Him, not displaced Him. "There is one God the Father, from whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him" (1 Cor. viii. 6). Yet there is just a shadow of plausibility in this charge of the Jews. The New Testament accords an honour to Christ which may be truthfully described as divine. His name is associated in the most solemn contexts with that of God: He is the way to God, through Him we have access and peace; from Him, as from God, flow spiritual blessings; men pray to Him and commune with Him, as they pray to and commune with God.

For two reasons this phenomenon is astonishing: first, because the men among whom it appears are monotheists of the most rigid and uncompromising type; secondly, because the historical person who received this homage from these severe monotheists was their own contemporary. It was one whom they had seen with their own eyes and their own

[1] From *The Biblical World.*

EVANGELICAL

hands had handled who enjoyed this lonely pre-eminence among the sons of men. Christ is recognized as inaugurating a new era, as ushering men into a new world, as dividing history in two. This comes out strikingly in the Epistle to the Galatians, and nowhere more strikingly than in iii. 23 and iii. 25; history is divided into two periods—the period *before faith* (that is, faith in Christ) *came*, and the period *after that faith had come*. The communion with God made possible for men through and in Christ stands to any communion that was possible before it as sonship to bondage; and even though the contrast between the dispensations is occasionally expressed elsewhere in terms less absolute, it aptly characterizes the infinite difference that the coming of Jesus was conceived by Paul to make in the relations of men to God. As Professor Denney has said, commenting on 1 Peter i. 21, "you who through Him are believers in God;" this "does not mean that they did not believe in God before they believed in Christ; there was true faith in God in the world before there was Christian faith. But although it was true, it was not faith in its final or adequate form; that is only made possible when men believe in God through Christ."

This, then, is the curious thing, that men now believe in God *through Christ*, and their communion with God is in some way mediated through Him. In the Old Testament men approached God directly; everywhere throughout the New Testament is the feeling of the indispensableness of Jesus. In all but four passages of the epistles, Christ is always in some way implicated in Paul's address to God, for whom the usual designation is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the introductory greetings to the letters the Lord Jesus Christ is frequently

co-ordinated with "God our Father" as the giver of grace and peace (1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2). Such a co-ordination on the part of contemporaries, of a historical person with Almighty God shows not only the tremendous place which He filled in their religious imaginations, but also the adequacy with which they felt Him to reveal God. What God now is to them, He is through Christ; and the only communion with God possible—for them at least—is through Him.

Nor is it surprising that this sometimes took the form of direct communion with Christ Himself. The context makes it practically certain that Paul's prayer for the removal of the thorn, which in some way interfered with his activity in the cause of the gospel, was addressed to Christ. Thrice, he tells us, he besought *the Lord* concerning this (2 Cor. xii. 8). Theoretically, the Lord may be either Christ or God, though the general usage of Paul greatly heightens the probability of the reference to Christ. But, as we read on, the probability becomes a practical certainty. "He"—that is, the Lord—"said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for (My) *power* is perfected in weakness.'" That is the answer to the prayer. Paul goes on: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses that *the power of Christ* may rest upon me." It is impossible not to hear in these words an echo of the answer to the prayer; in that case, the answer must have come from Christ, and the prayer must have been directed to Christ. In other words, communion with Christ is hardly, if at all, to be distinguished from communion with God. The revelation of God in Christ was so complete, and the relation of Christ as Son to God the Father so intimate, as to constitute a practical identity between them for the devotional life, where theological categories are forgotten. The impulse to

this apprehension of Christ by Paul came to him in that great initial experience, when the risen Christ appeared to him, as it were, from the spiritual world, and spoke to him the word which transformed him and launched him upon his wonderful Christian career. It is difficult to resist the impression that Paul believed himself to enjoy a conscious communion with Christ. In Corinth, for example, where his ministry must have been attended by many difficulties, keen opposition, and much temptation to fear, we are told (Acts xviii. 9) that "the Lord"—apparently Christ (*v.* 8)—"said unto Paul in the night by a vision, 'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee.'" Doubtless Paul's communion with the spiritual world is sometimes otherwise expressed. In the terrible experience through which he passed in Asia (possibly in Ephesus), alluded to in 2 Corinthians i. 8, he felt that he had been delivered from the desperate peril by God Himself, and was conscious of being comforted amid it all by God (*v.* 4). Again, in the great shipwreck scene, this sense of contact with the other world assumes another expression still: "for there stood by me this night *an angel* of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul'" (Acts xxvii. 23 f.). Incidentally, it is worth noting how these voices and visions from the other world come as a consolation and an inspiration, and in particular that their effect is to fill a timid heart with courage.

The remarkable thing, however, is that generally speaking, in these expressions of communion with the divine, Christ is in some way implicated. Even in the passage already quoted from 2 Corinthians, chap. i., though Paul is conscious of being comforted by *God*, who is for this reason called the Father of

mercies and God of all comfort, He is described in the immediately preceding clause as "the God and Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (*v.* 3); and still more specifically Paul acknowledges that this comfort, wherewith as he has just said (*v.* 4) he has been "comforted *of God*," abounds to him *through Christ* (*v.* 5)—that is, it is mediated by Him. In other words, in Paul's thought of God, Christ is not only not far away, He is indispensable. What God is now to Paul, He is through Christ. And this Christ, who has made God plain and brought Him nigh, is not a mere memory, not merely one of the world's mighty dead, but the *risen* Christ—everything depends upon that. This risen One can and does enter into the life of Paul, just as God Himself can and does. For the spiritual life of Paul there appears to be practically no distinction except that the thought of the earthly experiences of Him who had risen—*Jesus*, as he is significantly called in 2 Corinthians iv. 10–12—touches the larger and vaguer thought of God with the warmth, the detail, the concreteness of that great human personality, It is the life of Jesus, of the living Jesus, that is being manifested in Paul's mortal body. Probably the earthly experiences of the historical Jesus, which must have been very familiar to Paul, however little he may say about them, coloured his thoughts of the risen and reigning Christ much more powerfully than has been commonly allowed.

In any case, however, it is with the risen Christ that the New Testament epistles are chiefly concerned—with one who is the Prince of life and the Lord of glory. When we consider the amazing language used of our Lord throughout the epistles, we are not surprised to find that the Christian Church soon learned to pray to Him as to God. He is God's

unspeakable gift (2 Cor. ix. 15). He is the one through whom all things are (1 Cor. viii. 6). He is the eternal affirmation, the consummation, the satisfaction, the fulfilment incarnate of the ancient promises of God (2 Cor. i. 20), the finished realization of the divine purpose, as dreamt by or revealed to men, the living embodiment of all that pure hearts have hoped for, of all that God, by poets and prophets, has promised to do. He is the Emancipator, the Redeemer, the Transformer, the glorious Lord, the sinless One who died for all (2 Cor. v. 14), the one in whom the old things are passed away, and, behold! they are become new (v. 17), the one who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor (viii. 9), the one who must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet (1 Cor. xv. 25). He is the one who sits at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come (Eph. i. 20 f.); the one whom God highly exalted, giving unto Him the name which is above every name (Phil. ii. 9); the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. i. 15–18); the one mediator between God and man, who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. ii. 5); the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of His substance, upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb. i. 3); the great high-priest who hath passed through the heavens (iv. 14), who becomes unto all who obey Him the author of eternal salvation (v. 9), and the mediator of a new covenant (xii. 24).

With a conception of Christ so daring and splendid, the offering of prayer to Him by those who thus believed in Him would seem, if not necessary, at least

natural, especially when we consider how frequently His name is associated and practically co-ordinated with that of God the Father. The surprise rather is that, under these circumstances, prayers to Jesus should be so very rare in the New Testament. Apart from the prayer of Paul, already alluded to, for the removal of the thorn, there is the dying prayer of Stephen—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—and the brief prayer in Revelations xxii. 20, "Come, Lord Jesus." These simple appeals are probably the earliest form of prayer to Jesus. This phenomenon, infrequent in the New Testament though it be, is very significant. Its infrequency is easily explicable. At first the impulse to pray to Jesus would be hindered by the deep-seated monotheistic instincts of His contemporaries, by His own command to pray to the Father, and not least by their recollection of Him as a man. The farther men receded from the times of the historical Jesus, the more easy and natural would prayer to Him become. But already in the New Testament the phenomenon is present; and this, coupled with its unanimous and adoring testimony to the unique relation of Christ to the Father, shows how real and how vivid God had become to men in Jesus, how near He had come to them, and how completely He had been revealed to them in Him. To sum up, then, this part of the discussion, we may say that for the New Testament there is no such thing as communion with God apart from Jesus. This, as all other things, He had made new. Occasionally, communion with the unseen actually takes the form of communion with Jesus; but generally it is communion with God through Jesus. It was only through their experience of Him, of the outlook created by Him, and of the salvation accomplished for them and in them by Him, that this particular communion,

as distinguished from communion in the Old Testament, was possible.

Nowhere in the New Testament does communion with God receive the same consecutive treatment as in the First Epistle of John. This epistle might indeed be not inappropriately described as a treatise or rather a meditation on the nature and effects of fellowship with God. The object of the writer is that his readers might have fellowship with him: "Yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (i. 3). Here we find the same association as we found in Paul of Christ with the Father; and this statement also vividly suggests that larger fellowship of men with each other, into which they are brought by their common fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Here, too, again—more explicitly than in Paul—is this sense of fellowship charged with warm and affectionate reminiscences of the historic Jesus. The life to which John is so eager to bear witness is the life of One whom he had seen with his own eyes and touched with his own hands (i. 1). Fellowship with God is trenchantly described as a walk in the light; and if we walk in the light, we necessarily have fellowship with all other men who are also walking in the light (i. 7). John thus happily suggests, for the second time within the compass of a few verses, that the only link that really binds man to man is the link that binds each man to God and His Son. For John fellowship with God is not some vague, mystic, spiritual experience; it has a definite expression and content. It involves knowledge of God and love to God (ii. 3, 5), and the test of our possessing this knowledge and love is a simple ethical one. "Hereby we know that we know Him, *if we keep His commandments*" (ii. 3). Again, "*whoso keepeth His word*, in him verily hath

the love of God been perfected" (ii. 5). And again, "Hereby we know that we are in Him: he that saith he abideth in Him *ought himself also to walk even as He walked*" (ii. 6). In other words, communion with God has for its outward and visible expression a life of obedience to the will of Jesus, a life modelled on that of Jesus. The Christian must "walk even as He walked." Here again, as before, we find the transcendent importance of a knowledge of the historical Jesus. The fellowship with Him which John desires for his readers (i. 3) must be an intelligent fellowship—a fellowship resting upon an appreciation of the earthly walk of Jesus. It was in Him that the life which is the true goal of human existence was supremely and completely manifested (i. 2). To four points, singly or in combination, the thought of the epistle is continually recurring—the believer, Christ, God, other believers. In Christ and through the life that was manifested in Him, the believer has fellowship not only with Him, but with the Father, and further with all those who, like him, have fellowship with the Father and the Son. God is light, Christ walked in the light, the individual believer walks as He walked in the light, all believers walk in the light. The ideal world would thus be a world flooded with this glorious light, peopled by men who walked in it and loved it, a world which was all light, and in which was no darkness at all.

This is the ideal world, but in the real world there is darkness as well as light, and in some form or other this contrast runs through the New Testament. Frequently it appears as the contrast between God and the world, and a man cannot devote himself to the service of both any more than he can walk in light and darkness at the same time. The true life is the undivided life, the life which is altogether in

light. There cannot be at the same time communion with the Lord and communion with demons (1 Cor. x. 21). "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). "Whosoever would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (James iv. 4). Sometimes the contrast is between the flesh and the spirit. Nothing provokes Paul so much as the insinuation that he is "walking according to the flesh" (2 Cor. x. 2)—in modern language, that his conduct is dictated by carnal and worldly considerations. The Christian is a "spiritual" man; the spirit is at once the source of his new life and the continual inspiration of all his activities. "If then it is by the spirit that we live, by the spirit let us also walk" (Gal. v. 25). The outward life of the man who abides with Christ is sometimes described as a walk worthy of God or of the Lord. And this walk is possible whatever be the station in life. This is trenchantly suggested by a few incidental words in Paul's discussion of marriage (1 Cor. vii. 18–24). It matters nothing whether a man is circumcised or uncircumcised, a slave or a freeman; the only thing that matters is that he "abide with God"—and this is always gloriously possible. "Whatever be the state in which a man was called, in that let him remain—with God." The art of life consists in remaining "with God," close to the God who called us. To anyone who knows the peace and joy of that communion the most radical distinctions in the outward life, Paul argues, will be relatively insignificant, and he will be content to remain in the state in which he was called. "Were you a slave when you were called? Never mind;" for even as a slave it is possible to abide with God.

The practical effect of this communion upon the

outward life will be very definite and very obvious. The man who lives with God is not only cleansed in his own inner life, he is also an effective social force. Nothing could be farther from the spirit of the New Testament than to shut the individual up with God and leave him there. Though he abides with God, he must also abide with men; he stands in relations to other men, and these relations must be worthily fulfilled. It is not only that "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not," but such a one will "render unto all their dues." From this point of view, the practical exhortations which so frequently appear toward the close of an epistle are very striking. After the sublimest arguments in which we have, as it were, been caught up into Paradise, and heard words unutterable—as, for example, in the Epistle to the Ephesians or the Colossians—come simple appeals to wives, husbands, parents, children, masters, servants, to do their duty in their respective spheres. Not only is there no real divorce between these two aspects of an epistle, but the one is as inevitable as the other; one is the root, the other the fruit. Communion with God will express itself in the purest and noblest kind of social activity. To Paul it is the most natural thing in the world to conclude his great argument for the resurrection with a practical appeal: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

What is meant by communion with God will be best appreciated by looking at a soul to whom this communion was the supreme fact; and for this purpose it will be worth while to look a little more definitely at the life of Paul, as there is no man in the New Testament whom we know anything like so well. If ever a man lived evermore in the presence

of his God and his Master, it was he; and it is worthy of note that the most conspicuous element in the prayer-life of Paul was its note of thanksgiving. In everything prayer and supplication have to be blended with thanksgiving, as he told his Philippian converts (iv. 6), and in this he had learned the Master's lesson well. It was a duty "in everything to give thanks, for this is the will of God," and more than once occur the words "we are bound to give thanks." The frequent exhortations to his converts to "abound in thanksgiving, to give thanks always for all things to God," are but a reflex of the abounding gratitude of his own spirit. Deep as is his gratitude for all things, there is nothing which so touches Paul to thanksgiving as the contemplation of Christ—of the victory which He had won over sin and death, and of the spiritual blessings with which those are blessed who love and believe in Him. He is indeed the unspeakable gift, and for Him in superabundant measure "thanks be unto God."

The man to whom Jesus Christ and the salvation which was to be found in Him meant everything, could not but be intensely interested in the spiritual welfare of his converts; and it is no surprise to find that intercessory prayer played a large part in the inner life of Paul. He had his converts, as he tells us, in his heart, and he could fearlessly call God to witness that he longed after them all. He prays that their hearts may be directed into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ, and that they may have peace at all times (2 Thess. iii. 5, 16). When he prays for himself, it is only that he may become a fitter instrument and win a wider opportunity. His prayer for the removal of the thorn in the flesh was no doubt dictated rather by his anxiety for the welfare of the gospel than by any longing for

personal ease. His physical disability, whatever it was, he probably regarded as an impediment to his evangelistic work; but by the threefold refusal of his prayer he came to learn, not only in but even because of his weakness, a deeper experience of the power and the grace of Christ. For, tormented as he was by the thorn, this grace made itself so powerfully manifest that it not only comforted him amid distresses and persecutions, but strengthened him to do what was perhaps the mightiest and most far-reaching work for God that mortal man has ever done.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is the most autobiographical of all Paul's writings; and from its impetuous words there is frequently flashed upon us the sort of character that is produced by communion with God. At the very beginning (i. 4–11) we find him, in an hour of unusual and desperate peril, sustained by a sense of the comforting presence of God. He is—and, as a servant of Christ, he feels that he must be—a man of the most scrupulous sincerity, a man with a contempt for vacillation and compromise, a man whose yes is yes and whose no is no (i. 17), a man who speaks as in the presence of God (ii. 17), evermore conscious that all his conduct and speech is being continually submitted to a divine scrutiny, and that he will one day be revealed in his true character before the judgment-seat of Christ (v. 10). He bears ever about with him the thought of the future, at once consoling and solemnizing; and, for the present, he has the glad consciousness of beholding the face of the glorious Lord (iii. 18), and of enjoying a liberty like that which was the Lord's—deliverance from all that is literal and statutory into the free untrammelled life of the spirit. He is, too, a man of courage as well as of liberty; with God behind him and for him, who can be against him?

He claims to be courageous at all times (v. 6, 8), and the story of his intrepid career, with its peril and persecution (xi. 23–28), more than corroborates the justice of the claim. He lives under the ceaseless constraint of the love of Christ (v. 14), and in the world he knows that he is above the world, triumphant amid seeming defeat and obloquy (vi. 8–10). Though the outward man was being gradually destroyed by the hardships to which it was continually exposed for Jesus' sake, the inward man was being renewed from day to day (iv. 16). Every morning Paul felt a new accession of strength and joy, as he faced afresh the work God had given him to do. His spirit knew no weakness or weariness; it was not subject to the law of decay and death. He faced the future with good hope, for he came to realize that life was but a pilgrimage toward the nearer presence of his Lord, and that death would take him home (v. 8). And the secret of all this splendid courage and sincerity, this patience under affliction, this high hope in the presence of danger and death, was simply this, that his life was hid with Christ in God.

XIII

CIVILIZATION CRITICIZED AT THE SOURCE

A Study of Genesis i.–xi.[1]

What have we in Genesis i.–xi.? Clearly not history. Of a period that on the face of it is prehistoric, no history is possible. No one was present at the Creation, no one witnessed the Temptation and the Fall; nor does the writer anywhere claim to have had those facts supernaturally communicated to him, even granting that such a claim could be accepted. To any, if there now be any, who maintain that in these narratives we have history in the ordinary acceptation of that word, the final answer must be the challenge of the Almighty to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" What we have in these narratives is not history, but ideas woven through material furnished by ancient mythology and tradition: we have in them a philosophy of life, or rather—as "philosophy" is a term somewhat inapplicable to Old Testament thought—reflections on life.

Now this utilization of history or quasi-history as the vehicle of ideas is a regular feature of Hebrew historical narrative. What we have in it is always a combination of facts and ideas (or, in later times, theories or dogmas) in which the idea (or dogma) becomes increasingly more important than the fact. In this connection the place of the Book of Jonah

[1] From *The Hibbert Journal*.

among *the prophets* is significant. The book tells a story; but its appearance among the prophets immediately suggests that the proper way to treat it is not as a record of historic fact, but as a revelation of the prophetic mind—above all, of the universal love of God, which abhorred and transcended national boundaries. The thing of importance in it is not the element which links it with history, but with prophecy—that is, with the great illuminating and emancipating *ideas* for which the prophets pled.

This principle, so undeniable in Jonah, dominates all Hebrew historical writing. The story is never told for its own sake, but always to illustrate an idea or to point a moral; and, as the years go on, the moral becomes more and more deliberately pointed, and the idea becomes hardened into a dogma which not seldom rides roughshod through the fact. This process can be admirably illustrated from the Books of Judges, Kings, and Chronicles. The Book of Judges simply revels in fact—the old book, that is, of heroic tales, before they were set in an "instructive" framework by later editors, piously eager to read their contemporaries a much-needed lesson on the meaning of history from the chequered pages of the sombre past. When these hortatory passages, like ii. 6–iii. 6, are withdrawn, which really voice the urgency of later preachers and thinkers as they strive to stimulate the conscience of their contemporaries by their religious interpretation of the past, we are left with tales which will live for ever—of Deborah, for example, of Gideon, Jephthah, Samson. Even these early tales are not without their deliberately reflective note. The story of Abimelech ends thus: "Thus God requited the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren; and all the wickedness of the men of

Shechem did He requite upon their heads" (ix. 56 f.). But such comment is rare. The facts are lovingly recorded, and they speak for themselves. To the writer or writers of the Book of Kings, however, the facts are less interesting than the ideas which they can be made to illustrate. The writer who can dispose of two brilliant and highly important reigns of about half a century each in fourteen verses (2 Kings xiv. 23–xv. 7) is clearly interested in something other than the bare facts of history. This growing indifference to fact and emphasis upon idea or dogma reaches its climax in the Chronicler, who frequently modifies and sometimes contradicts the statements of the earlier sources in the interest of the view of the world for which he is pleading. All this goes to show that Hebrew historical writing is never merely narrative; it is also reflective, the reflective element becoming increasingly prominent as time wore on, and tending, in the end, to degenerate into an attitude to fact which was little more than mechanical. There is and there can be no such thing as disinterested history in the Old Testament. Men whose supreme interest was God could no more ignore that interest when they wrote as historians than when they spoke as prophets. Their history, like their prophecy, was a religious interpretation of life.

When, therefore, we approach Genesis i.–xi.—that is, the story of the world before the distinctively Hebrew story begins—we have to remember, first, that we have in these chapters just such an interpretation; and secondly, that if that interpretation turns out to be profound, it is likely to be relatively late. Now two ideas of massive proportion stand out from among the mythological material in which they are embedded. One is the unity of the race, the other is the order of nature. The unity of

the race is implied by the Creation story, and it is elaborated in the table of nations in chapter x. The Creation story, whether that of chapter i. ascribed to the priestly writer known as P, or that of chapter ii., which comes from the Jahwist prophetic writer known as J, is the story of the creation not of the Hebrew people, but of *man*, humanity. That may seem a simple point, but in reality its implications are immensely important; for by such a thought tribalism is implicitly transcended, humanity is conceived as ultimately and essentially one, and universalism is here in embryo. The other thought of the order of nature is expressed in the sublimely simple words: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease" (viii. 22). It is there —such is the implication of the context—in the regular flow and movement of the universe, that the presence, the power, the love, the fidelity of God are most surely seen. Now the greatness of this thought lies in its implicit and perhaps unconscious opposition to that emphasis upon miraculous interference, as a special proof of the presence of God, which characterizes so many narratives of the Old Testament. We have only to think, for example, of such a story as Gideon's fleece (Judges vi. 36–40) to realize how immeasurably superior in religious insight are the grave and noble words of Genesis. It has now to be noted that both these ideas to which we have referred are prophetic ideas—ideas, that is, which place the writer on the level of the literary prophets. The first idea of the unity of the race underlies the opening chapters of Amos (i. and ii.), with its vista of the nations as all amenable to one moral law. The second idea is implicit throughout prophecy. With the curious and highly interesting exception

of Isaiah's offer of a sign to Ahaz "either from the depths of Sheol or in the height above" (Isa. vii. 11), the prophets lay no stress upon miracle whatever. Though no men ever more earnestly sought to impress upon their audiences their own urgent sense of the inescapable presence and will of God, they deal all the time with historical and moral magnitudes. Whatever primitive material—and there is much—may lie embedded in the opening chapters of Genesis, the strength, ease, and simplicity with which those two great ideas are enunciated lead us to believe that the men who moulded that material were profound and generous thinkers, own brothers to the great prophets of the eighth century, and but little, if at all, earlier than they.

Let us look now more particularly at the interpretation of life presented, by implication, in these chapters. The writer has courageously faced the facts, and he finds life to be a grim and perpetual struggle: without this there can be no bread, without bread there can be no life at all. "Thorns and thistles shall the earth bring forth unto thee: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (iii. 18 f.). Behind this word, as behind the words of our Lord in the parable, lies experience of the stony and stubborn Palestinian soil; but the truth of its criticism of life goes far beyond its original and local application. One might almost hear an undertone of pessimism in it: indeed, the writer has been called the father of Ecclesiastes. There are at least two utterances of J which recall to our minds the later protagonist of pessimism: this one about the stubborn soil which wearies the body and all but breaks the heart—a passage which reflects a mood very much like that of Ecclesiastes when he said, "That which is crooked"—and everything is crooked

—"cannot be made straight" (i. 15). Life is hard, the world is crooked, and only the smug or untravelled soul can pronounce it very good. Professor Macdonald, in the recently published *Studia Semitica et Orientalia* [1] (p. 121), says: "There is distinct humour in the picture of the farmer labouring with the recalcitrant soil which produces everything but what he wants." But, if this is to be described as humour, it is surely humour of the grimmest kind. To the man who wrote that passage, and who had perhaps himself struggled with the niggard soil till beads of sweat stood out upon his brow, life was a terrible and tremendous thing; and many who know nothing of the soil know enough of other struggles to feel the poignant truth of his criticism. The other point in which the writer recalls Ecclesiastes is in his view of woman. It was she who led astray—she who, weaker and more easily dazzled by a seductive appeal and an alluring promise, involved man's life in misery untold. Who, with this story in mind, does not instantly think of the famous and bitter words: "A thing that I find to be more bitter than death is woman: for she is a veritable net, with her heart of snares and her hands of fetters. The man who enjoys the favour of God escapes her, but the sinner is caught by her. One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found" (Eccles. vii. 26, 28)? For all these resemblances the Jahwist and Ecclesiastes are by no means kindred spirits, except in so far as they both resolutely face facts. But the Jahwist differs from Ecclesiastes above all in this, that though to him the facts of life, like the soil, are stubborn, yet he keeps his temper—he is not bitter—and he

[1] By Seven Members of Glasgow University Oriental Society (MacLehose, Jackson & Co., Glasgow).

keeps his faith. When the later pious accretions to Ecclesiastes, which blunt the edge of his incisive challenges of the world-order, are withdrawn (cf. iii. 17, viii. 12 f.), he stands forth as an uncompromising pessimist: whereas the pessimism of the Jahwist is mitigated by a broader and serener outlook upon the facts.

A further point, however, is worthy of notice. While the words in Genesis iii. 17–19 are a criticism of human life in general, they are more particularly, if not a farmer's criticism of life, at any rate a criticism of the farmer's life. It is he who wrestles very literally with the "accursed" ground, he who knows most about the struggle with the thorns and thistles which brings out the sweat upon his brow. The cultivable land is accursed, and the toil expended upon it is a judgment. Of course there is another strain of thought in the Old Testament to which God is Himself the great Farmer, who puts into the hearts of men the laws that govern the processes of agriculture (Isa. xxviii. 23–29). But the Jahwist represents the more primitive conception; and it only begins to be understood when we remember that Canaan, the cultivated land, with its advanced civilization and its sensuous Baal-worship, was felt by certain groups of very strict Jahweh worshippers to be a sort of wicked antithesis to the austere simplicities and unadorned Jahweh-worship of the desert, where the Hebrews may be said, under Moses, to have begun their distinctive national life. It is permissible, then, to hear in this tale, which accounts the cultivable land as accursed, an undertone of protest against the whole way of life and civilization associated with that land. Doubtless this interpretation is not inevitable, but it is possible; and at any rate the note of protest becomes more audible as we move through the succeeding chapters.

An echo of it comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The story is slightly complicated by the presence of two trees—both magic trees—and the *raison d'être* of both is to explain the origin of death. The one tree is the tree of life: that is, the tree whose fruit will confer immortal life on the being or beings who may contrive to partake of it; and death comes from the failure to eat of this tree, the road to which is for ever guarded by cherubs and a flaming sword. The other is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and death comes from disobedience to the voice of God, who had forbidden His creatures to eat of it. The first story is naïve and external, the second is more profound: for though it, too, makes use of very primitive forms of thought, such as that God is jealous of man (iii. 22), it fully understands that disobedience is the way of death. But what is the forbidden fruit that grows on this tree with the strange long name? The intense ethical temper of the Bible inclines us to suppose that by "the knowledge of good and evil" must be meant moral knowledge, that knowledge of the distinction between what is morally good and evil which becomes so luridly clear when we have fallen before temptation. But "good and evil" does not inevitably mean this. It is a Hebrew phrase used to cover all the ground in question, just as we might say in English, "He said nothing—good, bad, or indifferent," without using these words with any moral connotation at all. When Zephaniah (i. 12) describes the easy-going plutocrats of his time as saying in their heart, "Jehovah will not do good, neither will He do evil," he just means that they imagine Jehovah will do nothing at all. Practically good and evil in such connections mean simply everything, anything: and that this is the meaning in

the Genesis passage becomes highly probable when we consider the words attributed in iii. 22 to Jahweh: "Behold, the man is become as one of us"—that is, as one of the supernatural Beings of whom Jahweh is chief—"to know good and evil." This is most naturally interpreted of knowledge generally, and not specifically of moral knowledge. Omniscience is the prerogative of the godhead, and the man who aspires to it is guilty of a vaulting ambition which will place him for ever among the gods, unless his career is cut short by death. Is it over-subtle to detect in this aspect of the story a protest against knowledge as a dangerous and wicked thing, and a protest, by implication, against a civilization to which an ever-accumulating knowledge is indispensable? Is there not here audible the voice of one who was content with life in its simple and rudimentary forms, and who was only too conscious of the perils of a refined and scientific civilization?

This seems to be borne out by the story of Cain and Abel. Abel, we are told, was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. "Now Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jahweh, and Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jahweh had respect to Abel and to his offering, but to Cain and to his offering He had not respect" (iv. 2–4). Why did He respect the one and not the other? Here again the temptation is to put too much moral meaning into the story. In the discussion already referred to (p. 122), Professor Macdonald remarks: "Neither Cain nor Abel, in virtue of their occupation, was God-pleasing. Abel was a shepherd, but that was not why he was accepted, for it is the shepherd's life into which Cain is driven away and in which he will be hidden from the face of the LORD. Cain was a

farmer, but that was not why he was rejected, for his punishment was to be sent away from the cultivated soil. The true position as to the pleasing of God is given in verse 6: it depends on the attitude of each man towards sin, which is always lying in wait and seeking to control him." Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 4) asserts that it was *by faith* that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, though there is not the remotest hint of this in the original story. It hardly seems natural or reasonable to read into the simple statement that Jahweh respected Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's, what we *later* learn (in verses 6 and 7) about Cain's attitude to sin: we have to explain Jahweh's preference for Abel's sacrifice and His rejection of Cain's at the point where these respective statements stand. And in reality nothing is simpler. "Abel was a keeper of the sheep, and Jahweh had respect unto Abel and to his offering," simply because—since the context states no other motive—he was a keeper of sheep. Again, "Cain was a tiller of the ground, and unto Cain and to his offering Jahweh had not respect," simply because—since the context states no other motive—he was a tiller of the ground. In other words, the passage is written from the point of view of the shepherd, and it expresses that antagonism between the pastoral and the agricultural, between Jahweh-worship and Baal-worship, or more broadly between simplicity and civilization, which runs through so much of the earlier history and literature of the Old Testament. Yet it has to be carefully noted that, though the writer loves the shepherd and the sheep and regards the fruit of the ground as no fit offering for Jahweh—in this, perhaps, continuing the view of the previous chapter that the cultivable ground was accursed (iii. 17)

—his ideal is not exactly the nomadic. The fate to which Cain is doomed shows that nomadism is a curse. The nomadic and the pastoral are not entirely co-extensive. Abel is not far from the cultivated land, for the brothers are near enough to quarrel: but neither is he in "the great and terrible wilderness," for to be doomed to roam there is a penalty and a judgment. Literary criticism assigns the passage to a writer in Judah: with such an origin agree the contents, which idealize the life of the shepherd on the edge of the wilderness. We may think of the writer as akin both in habitat and in soul to Amos. He, too, was a shepherd on the Judæan hills, not far from the desert; and he, too, shows the same scorn of the cruel Cain-like civilization associated with the settled land. In the nature of the case Amos's criticism is more explicit, and it is directed with peculiar vehemence against the cities, particularly against the luxurious "palaces," which the prophet fiercely threatens with the devouring flames (i. 4, 7, etc.). It is essentially a moral criticism, and not simply an attack upon civilization as such. All the same, it is a shepherd's criticism: he "hates the palaces"—as he declares that his God does (vi. 8)—not only because their crimes have harried his soul, but because he knows that the safe and happy life, with which God is well pleased, is beside the tent and among the sheep. His message is the unfolding of the idea which lies in Genesis in embryo. Even a century and a half after Amos, and not long before the fall of Judah, this idea is still sturdily represented by the clan known as the Rechabites, who dwelt all their days in tents, not only drinking no wine, but building no houses, sowing no seed, and planting no vineyard (Jer. xxxv. 7–10); and in this they no doubt carry on the strictest and

oldest tradition of the life befitting true worshippers of Jahweh.

The story of Cain is merged in that of his inventive descendants; and in the figures of Jubal and Tubal-cain, the father of music and the forger of bronze and iron instruments, the definite features of civilization, its amenities and its instruments, begin to emerge; and, by a juxtaposition which can hardly be unintentional, this is immediately followed by Lamech's cruel song of vengeance (iv. 23 f.), which breathes "a savage exultation in the fresh power of vengeance which all the novel instruments have placed in their inventors' hands:—

> 'A man who but struck me, I slew,
> And a youth who but bruised me.
> If Cain shall be seven times avenged,
> Then seventy-seven times shall be Lamech.'

How weird is this; how terrible! The first results of civilization are to equip hatred and render revenge more deadly. And all the more weird is this little fragment, that out of those far-off days it seems to mock us with some grotesque reflection of our own time. Civilization finding its apotheosis in enormous armaments; wealth and prosperity leading people to an arrogant clamour for war." These truly prophetic words of Sir George Adam Smith (*Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 97) were not written during the war, but twenty-three years ago, and they help us to feel how profound and subtle is the criticism of civilization that underlies those simple-seeming documents of the olden time.

The climax of this criticism is reached in the story of the building of the city and the tower of Babel (Gen. xi.), which has been described as "an untouched

piece of folk-lore." In its naïve account of the origin of the various languages spoken by men and of the distribution of peoples over the surface of the earth, and in its picture of Jahweh's jealousy of men and His fear of human ambitions, it is doubtless a thoroughly primitive tale: it is "untouched," if you like. But it is untouched because it did not require to be touched: it already expressed, just as it stood, the mature mind of the redactor on the wickedness, the arrogance, the perils of the city, and, in general, of the civilization with which cities are bound up. It is an implicit criticism, and, as such, falls into line with most of the other tales in Genesis i.–xi.—the criticism of a mind of great intellectual and moral maturity, which believed that the interests of morality and religion were safest where life was simplest.

Throughout the Bible the tent and the city are in frequent contrast. Some of its writers stand for the one, some for the other. Isaiah believed in the city and in its ultimate redemption: he looked hopefully forward to the day when Jerusalem could be truthfully called the Righteous City, the Faithful Town (i. 26); and to that same city, purged of its uncleanness and worshipping a supremely holy God with a new heart and according to a minutely regulated ceremonial, Ezekiel gave the name Jahweh-shammah, "Jahweh is there"—*there*, in such a city (xlviii. 35). And John comforts his heart with a vision of the new Jerusalem, the holy city whose wall had twelve foundations, descending out of heaven from God (Rev. xxi. 2, 14). In a trenchant antithesis the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews thus extols the faith of Abraham as he wandered about in the land that was not yet his own: "Dwelling in tents, he looked for a city" (xi. 9 f.). To such

thinkers the tent was the symbol of fragility and impermanence, the city of strength and stability: "he looked for the city *which hath the foundations.*" Abraham looked for the city: that is precisely what the writer of Genesis i.–xi. does not do. He feared the city, he attacked it in the story of Babel as the apotheosis of an arrogant godlessness. Solomon in all the glory of his palace and temple and far-flung trade and commerce meant no more to him than to Jesus. Glory of that kind was resented by the austerer Hebrew genius, to which the simplest meadow flower was incomparably more glorious. Solomon had inaugurated in Jerusalem a reign of materialism, oppression, profligacy, and idolatry, and such things may well have seemed inseparable from city life. The Jahwist shuddered to see the arrogant and baleful splendours of Babylon reproduced within the land of promise. He loved the quiet places among the tents and the sheep on the edge of the wilderness, and the God he worships is not the great Builder and Maker of the City with Foundations, but the Shepherd whose haunts are among the green pastures and the waters of rest.

XIV

THE PROPHET AS PESSIMIST[1]

The task of considering the prophet as pessimist is both an ungracious and difficult one: ungracious, because it compels us to look at the prophets in their least prophetic mood; and difficult, because the prophets were not pessimists, or only pessimists incidentally. It has, indeed, become a commonplace to say that the prophets were optimists; and this commonplace, like most others, conceals a truth whose greatness is not appreciated, because it does not receive profound enough consideration. A prophet would only be half a prophet if he did not believe in the ultimate triumph of the principles into which he has so keen an insight. He might rebuke and exhort in burning words; but he would be little more than a moral censor if he did not believe that in the long run his message would be vindicated by history. Or shall we not rather say vindicated by God? For, at bottom, it is the prophet's faith in God, as Lord of all, and of the inevitable triumph of His purpose, that enables him to stand when the world is reeling. The true prophet is not merely a preacher with unusual insight; he is the messenger of God, and is conscious of sharing something of His far-off triumph. He always sustains His soul upon a vision of the latter days.

It will not be supposed, then, that we in any sense regard the prophets as convinced and consistent

[1] From *The Westminster* (Toronto).

pessimists, or their message as either inspired by or issuing in pessimism. They were the most brilliant and courageous optimists the world has ever seen; and any elements—and they are very few—that even seem to savour of pessimism are soon transmuted by the powerful alchemy of a faith which saw history slowly, but surely, moving on to the consummation of the divine purpose.

At the same time those elements, few as they are, are well worthy of study. For they bring prophecy and indeed the Bible generally, and more particularly the Old Testament, very powerfully home to the heart of the modern man. It does us good to remember that the Bible was written by men of like feelings with ourselves—men who looked out upon the world with brave and honest eyes, and who, as they looked, sometimes felt doubts rise in their hearts and tears gather to their eyes. They are, so to say, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, because they know what is in man. They were beset behind and before by the problems of the moral order of the universe, and they did not pretend to understand them altogether, any more than they pretended to understand the God who seemed to tolerate such things in the world He had created. Like the great apostle of the New Testament, they would not have been ashamed to admit that they but knew in part, and prophesied in part.

It is here, too, perhaps that the Old Testament can perform for us a service which the New could hardly render. Men who had looked upon the face of Christ, and heard the words of grace that proceeded out of His mouth, or men who, without seeing or hearing Him, had yet stood very near Him in history, were so thrilled by the joy of their redemption and so conscious of the presence and power of the

Lord, to whom had been committed all authority in heaven and on earth, that doubt became all but an impossibility. For doubt cannot live in an atmosphere of such assurance. But in the Old Testament it is different. The God in whom they believed, and in whose intervention they trusted and hoped, was invisible; they had not seen the object of their assurance incarnate. The Word had not yet been made flesh, and, to that extent, faith was the more difficult; and they occasionally expressed with surprising freedom their wonder at the anomalies which God seemed to do nothing to remove.

And in many not unimportant respects the complicated and highly organized world in which we live and move bears a strange resemblance to the simpler world of the Hebrew prophets. We, like them, have to face fundamental problems, and, like them, too, we yearn to know the naked truth. We do not wish to deceive ourselves or to be deceived by anyone or anything, whether by great teachers or venerable systems of thought; and when doubts rise in the hearts of thinking men we are loth to condemn them as inspirations of the devil. For we know that many a good man and many a great prophet lifted up his soul in the agonized cry, "How long?" Faith is not credulity, neither is it closing one's eyes to facts; it is a steady trust in God, when the eyes look fairly at perplexing things. It is the unwavering conviction that the marvel of His goodness is far greater than the pain and suffering and hope deferred, which makes the heart heavy and sore. But the true thinker and teacher is under the obligation, as he loves the truth, to face both orders of fact, alike those which confirm and those which perplex his faith.

" He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them : thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own."

Auguste Sabatier has said somewhere that in Jesus Christ is optimism without frivolity and seriousness without despair. " Optimism without frivolity "—that is the only optimism with which the modern preacher can face the man of to-day. If the hearer suspects that the preacher has reached his optimism too easily he will have none of it ; he will conclude that his instructor does not know life and its hard, stern, pitiless facts. And that is where Hebrew prophecy in particular, and the Bible in general, comes as a corrective to a flippant optimism. It looks upon men as if it loved them, and is vexed unto tears by their obstinate impenitence ; it looks up to God with trust in its eyes, and is grieved, and sometimes indignant, that He should be so long in coming. It sternly asks, " Why tarry the wheels of His chariot " ? Optimism, to be worth much, has to be reached through, and held in spite of, the facts which have made many men pessimists. Even Jesus could say, " Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

In estimating the pessimism of the Hebrew prophet it is perfectly just to go beyond the area of prophecy proper, because most of the Old Testament—the larger part of the historical books on the one hand, and such books as the Book of Job on the other—were written by men of prophetic spirit. The Psalms, too, would yield much material for the investigation of this problem. True, there is only one Psalm—the eighty-eighth—whose despair is unmitigated ; but sad and gloomy notes are heard in some psalms, and shrill and piercing strains in others. One psalmist appeals to God to remember how short and pathetic life is

(Ps. lxxxix. 47), and urges Him to make good an ancient promise to which recent events seem to show He is indifferent. What does it all mean—the appeal to arise and judge, to help and save—what mean the frequent cries, Wherefore and How long?—if not that the faith of the psalmists is strained and provoked by the facts? They do not meekly accept it—at least, not all of them—they rise up with burning words upon their tongues, and challenge it. Doubtless these words show what a tremendous reality God was to the psalmists: they could speak to Him, and argue with Him, and contend with Him, face to face, as a man with his friend. But they also show how perplexing frequently was the psalmists' situation, and how unconventionally they faced it. They counted God their friend, and they freely gave vent to their surprise that He allowed such things to be. Under this category the cursing psalms might also be investigated. For what are those awful cries to the "God of vengeance" and those expressions of solemn delight at the prospect of a day when the righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked (Ps. lviii. 10)—what is it all but the utterance of a passionate belief in the moral order, which is for the moment thwarted and contradicted by the triumph of wrong?

The historical books are haunted throughout by that "sense of tears in mortal things." The Bible opens indeed with a fall, and with a world in which "men must work and women must weep"—men working for their daily bread till the sweat stands upon their brow, women performing with tears and sorrow the function of wife and mother—men working and women weeping upon a world whose soil is hard and stubborn, and which brings forth thorns and thistles. The historian understood the curse under which life lies as well as the redemption of which it is capable, and

for which, in the intention of God, it is destined. And so the weary round goes on. Moses goes to his unknown grave with nothing but a sight of the goodly land—immortal type of frustrated hope and defeated yearning. Josiah, after his great and earnest reform, slain at Megiddo and brought back in a chariot dead to the city in which he had sought to rule justly, is a symbol of the too common reward of moral and religious zeal. These were the things that staggered faith and made it easy for the scoffer and the indifferent to say, as they said in Zephaniah's time, "Jehovah does neither good nor evil" (i. 12); that is, He simply leaves the world to take its course. He leaves a Josiah slain upon the field of battle, and He allows a Nebuchadrezzar to ride roughshod over the province of Judah, and lay its glory in the dust.

Sometimes, of course, the reasons for the pessimism are not hard to seek; they are connected with an earlier and more superficial conception of the ways of God, *e.g.*, with the view that He rewards faithfulness by prosperity and punishes infidelity by misfortune, or with the view that the dealings of God with the individual are confined to this life. Unquestionably the problems presented by the moral anomalies of the world would not have pressed quite so heavily upon the heart of the prophets had they had any clear vision of, or robust faith in, a future life, in which the balance could have been redressed. This is, in part at least, the keenness of Job's sorrow.

> "For hope there may be for a tree:
> Though cut down, it may sprout once more,
> And the shoots therefrom need not fail.
> Though its root in the earth wax old,
> And its stem be dead in the ground,
> It may bud at the scent of water,
> And put forth boughs like a plant.
> But the strong man dies and lies prostrate;

Man breathes his last, and where is he ?
Like the floods of a vanished sea,
Like a river dry and withered—
Till the heavens be no more, he awakes not,
Nor ever is roused from his sleep " (Job xiv. 7–12).[1]

And in a later age the same doubt produces the same gloom. " Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward ? " asks the disillusioned author of Ecclesiastes (iii. 21). The Authorized Version obliterates the pathos of the question asked by this gloomy and far-travelled soul, by translating " Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward ? " But the translation of the Revised Version, supported as it is by the Greek, is almost certainly correct. To this perplexed spirit the end of man and beast seems alike, and that is one of the elements that contribute to the sad refrain, " Vanity of vanities."

The pessimistic mood is created, or at least encouraged, in two ways : by facts and by theories—theories which cannot adequately explain the facts. In conflict with either of those elements a candid spirit may be touched to temporary pessimism. Both are illustrated by the Book of Job. He was a good and upright man, who feared God and shunned evil, yet he lost family, property, and all but life itself ; and, though in his sorrow he reaches heights of great and even marvellous serenity, yet there are occasional words of irritation and even defiance. The facts provoke. But they do not provoke so much as do the theories which the friends proffer in explanation of the facts. The religious opinions and theories of well-meaning but conventional men, are often so superficial, unjust and inadequate, that they may move a candid and unconventional thinker to repudiate

[1] This translation is taken from my *Wisdom Books in Modern Speech* (James Clarke & Co.).

them with more zeal than discretion. They may shake his faith in the sanity of the common people; and in any true appreciation of the meaning and teaching of the Book of Job, we have to remember that the professional defenders of the faith, against whom he contends with increasing vehemence, were "weavers of lies," and are expressly said not to have spoken about God the thing that was right, as His servant Job had done (xlii. 8). The undertone of pessimism which can be distinctly heard running through this splendid song of faith, comes in part from the obtuseness of conventional opinion, as represented by the friends.

It is at once amazing and refreshing to see how frank, however temporary, was the scepticism, as we might almost call it, of some of the prophets. "O Lord," cries Habakkuk, "how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear? . . . O Thou, that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, why dost Thou look upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy peace?" (i. 2, 13). If God is too pure to look upon such things, why then does He look upon them? asks the prophet. And the steadying answer only comes when he takes his lonely stand upon the watch-tower and lifts himself above the crowd. He who was an optimist upon the tower, was a pessimist upon the ground. Still more humanly earnest are the burning words of Jeremiah. "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee; yet would I reason the cause with Thee; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Thou hast planted them, they have taken root, they grow, they bring forth fruit; Thou art near in their mouths, but far from their hearts" (Jer. xii. 1 f.). In other words, those who ignore God are those who succeed in life, and those who love and serve Him, like Jeremiah, are doomed to sorrow

and persecution. This is a practical arraignment of the divine government of the world. Jeremiah would not run the world so; he is for the moment vexed and confounded.

It would be interesting and profitable to trace this line of thought, through not only the prophetic, but through all the books of the Old Testament—to watch how candidly and unconventionally the prophets occasionally express their surprise, if not disappointment, with the facts of the moral universe, and how they gradually rise superior to their own disappointment; how they meet the taunting proverb of their contemporaries, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," and catch glimpses of the truth that a man's character is his destiny. But, without doing more than throw out the suggestion, it will be enough here to call attention to the frank recognition, on the part of Old and New Testament alike, of the sorrowful surprises of life. The sense of life's sadness was voiced now and then by psalmists who felt that they were strangers on the earth, and that man flourisheth as the flower of the field. And it is a Christian writer who asks, "What is your life? For ye are a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." It is true that the penetrating consciousness of God, which possessed the Hebrew in a measure that was unique, lightened much of life's mystery, and transformed its grief; but in the Old Testament at least, there are voices of men who have seen the pathos of things and drunk deep of life's sorrow and sadness. Yet sooner or later these voices always die away in the sublime music of faith. The broken-hearted people of Malachi's time who wistfully asked, "Where is the God of justice?" (Mal. ii. 17) and who complained, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that

we have kept His charge and walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?" (iii. 14) are bravely reminded by the prophet that Jehovah has His book of remembrance—a book in which their names are written and which will keep Him in mind of them (iii. 16), and that one day the sun will arise from whose rays will stream light upon their darkened world and healing on their broken hearts (iv. 2). Sublimest of all is the great assurance of another sufferer, tormented by the baffling anomalies of the moral order:

> "As for me, I am with Thee alway,
> Thou hast hold of my right hand.
> By a plan of Thine own Thou dost guide me,
> And wilt afterward take me to glory"
> (Ps. lxxiii. 23 f.).

XV

ISAIAH AND WAR[1]

Analogies abound between Isaiah's time and our own; but I do not propose to dwell upon them, or to point the moral of his message for our own day. The prophet, if we can only form a living picture of him as he moves, in his sovereign way, among the problems and perplexities of his time, will speak very directly across the ages to our world too, and so intelligibly that the least imaginative modern reader can point the moral for himself.

The Fact of War

Of all the facts of his time the most lurid was the fact of war—always present as a spectre and a possibility, and very often as a grim reality. Indeed, throughout the whole of the Old Testament the sword holds a pathetically prominent place: from many a page it flashes, "made as lightning, sharpened for slaughter" (Ezek. xxi. 20 (E.V. 15)). It is no fancy picture that the prophet paints of war, the people were only too familiar with its anxieties, alarms and horrors. Twice at least Jerusalem herself was threatened. Once her king was "shut up like a bird in a cage," and the country of which she was the capital was cruelly overrun by Sennacherib, who boasts that he besieged and captured forty-six of its strong cities; so that Isaiah can say:

[1] From *The Expositor*.

"Your country is desolate,
Your cities are burned with fire;
And the daughter of Zion is left
Like a booth in a vineyard.
Had Jahweh of Hosts
Not left us a remnant,
Almost had we been as Sodom,
And like to Gomorrah" (i. 7–9).

The terror inspired by these actual or projected assaults upon the capital is vividly reflected in the trepidation of two of Judah's kings: in Ahaz, of whom it is said that "his heart and the heart of his people shook, as shake the forest trees before the wind" (Isa. vii. 2); and in Hezekiah, who, with beating heart, went up to the temple to spread Sennacherib's insolent letter before Jahweh, as if the more surely to evoke from Him an avenging response, and prayed an impassioned prayer for deliverance (xxxvii. 14 ff.). On the former occasion we see Ahaz going out anxiously to inspect his water-supply (vii. 3)—always Jerusalem's weak spot in time of siege; and on the latter, we see the people carefully examining their armoury and feverishly repairing the breaches in the city walls (xxii. 9 f.). We see the Jewish officials wincing under the Rabshakeh's taunting allusion to their deficiency in the cavalry arm, and thereafter requesting him to be good enough to conduct the negotiations in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew, so that the people should not know what was going on (xxxvi. 8, 11). In a vision, resting doubtless upon some reality, we see the people in their extremity appealing to wizards and necromancers, hurrying across their devastated land, hard pressed and hungry, cursing the king who could not, and the God who would not save them, looking in vain up to the heaven and down to the earth, wrapped in the thick night of despair (viii. 19 ff.). And

when the bloody work of war was done, we see the survivors, few as the berries left upon an olive tree, after its branches had been beaten (xvii. 6). Again, we see perplexed statesmen scheming for the help now of Assyria, now of Egypt, sending their ambassadors across the great and terrible wilderness, with animals loaded with presents for the Power whose help they are courting (xxx. 6). It is all a very graphic testimony to the perplexities and terrors into which a nation is thrown by the advent or the imminence of war.

Further, Isaiah's observations of the fortunes of the northern kingdom had taught him that the fear or the pressure of war easily led to social revolution; and very striking is the picture of the social and political chaos which he anticipates for Judah, when the normal sanctities would be no longer recognized, and there would be a universal reluctance to assume the responsibilities of office.

> "One shall take hold of his fellow and say to him:
> 'Your family has a robe of office;
> Come, and do you be our ruler,
> And take this ruin in hand.'
> Then will the other protest,
> 'Nay, verily: *I* cannot heal you.
> In my own house there is no bread,
> Nor yet is there a robe.
> Ye shall not thrust upon *me*
> The leadership of the people.'"[1]

Elsewhere Isaiah describes civil war as a species of cannibalism, in which

> "No man spareth his brother,
> But each eats the flesh of his neighbour" (ix. 19 f.).

It is plain that to the prophet and his contemporaries

[1] iii. 6 f. From my translation in *Isaiah in Modern Speech* (James Clarke & Co.).

the actual and resultant horrors of war were very familiar.

The Meaning of War

Dreaded by the people, war was welcomed by the prophet as a stern vindication of the moral order which he had so passionately urged and they had so flagrantly defied. Upon the grim fact of war, as upon every fact, Isaiah put a moral meaning. To him it was (i) a penalty and (ii) a call—a penalty for sin, the sins especially of national pride and social injustice; and a call to the nation to return to the moral law they had flouted and the holy God they had defied.

(i). *a.* "*If ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be made to taste the sword* (i. 20)—there is Isaiah's philosophy of war. To the man who began his ministry with a vision of Jahweh upon His throne, high and lifted up, and who believed with all his soul that there was no place in the universe for the exaltation of any other, no sin was more odious or inexplicable than pride; and in one of his earliest and most splendid poems he describes the doom which, in the terrible day of Jahweh, is to hurl the pride of Judah to the ground and to drive men cowering with fear into the dens and caves of the earth.

> "For a day of Jehovah is coming
> Upon all that is haughty and proud,
> Upon all that is lofty and high:
> Upon cedars of Lebanon all,
> And oaks of Bashan all;
> Upon all the great mountains
> And all the high hills;
> Upon all the proud towers
> And all the strong walls,
> And all gallant ships.

Man's haughtiness shall be brought down,
And man's loftiness shall be laid low,
And in that great day
Shall Jehovah alone be exalted.

Get ye into the caves of the rocks,
And the holes of the earth,
From before the dread presence of God,
When He rises up to smite earth with His terror" (ii. 12 ff.).

When a nation begins to boast of her possessions and achievements, it is time for her pride to be punctured by the enemy's sword. As to Judah, this was also the prophet's message to Israel, who had said *in pride and in stoutness of heart*:

"The bricks are fallen,
But with stone we will build;
The sycamores are hewn down,
But we will change them for cedars."

So Jahweh—note the connexion—

"So Jahweh exalted his adversaries against him,
And stirred up his enemies" (ix. 9 f.).

Such too is the burden of his elegy—if it be his—on Phœnicia, that brilliant incarnation of the purely commercial spirit untouched and unrestrained by religion, the country whose ships were upon every sea and whose motto was "Phœnicia rules the waves." "Who hath purposed her destruction?" the poet asks; and he answers:

"Jahweh of hosts hath purposed it,
To desecrate pride,
To abase all splendour,
All the honoured of earth" (xxiii. 9).

War may be a potent instrument for the humbling of national pride.

b. But, according to Isaiah, social injustice no less surely than pride is chastised by the terrible discipline of war. The moral condition of Judah in the prophet's day is most summarily set forth in the fifth chapter, which announces its repeated *Woes* upon the vices by which contemporary society was being corrupted. These vices were the evil-smelling grapes which the Vine Judah had brought forth after the long and loving care exercised upon her by Jahweh, the great Vine-dresser. The vineyard song, illustrating the high privilege and the lamentable fall of Judah, is thus happily translated by the late Dr Cheyne :

> " A song will I sing of my friend,
> A love-song touching his vineyard.
> A vineyard belongs to my friend
> On a hill that is fruitful and sunny ;
> He digged it and cleared it of stones,
> And planted there vines that are choice ;
> A tower he built in the midst,
> And hewed also therein a wine-vat ;
> And he looked to find grapes that are good.
> Alas ! it bore grapes that are wild " (v. 1 ff.).

And the wild grapes are the social wrongs denounced in the following section—landgrabbing, which involved the unscrupulous exploitation of the poor, devotion to drink and pleasure, scepticism and scorn of the moral order, indifference to moral distinctions, the introduction into the social order of practices which brought bitterness and darkness, where there should have been sweetness and light. In particular the soul of the country was being sodden with drink. Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the religious leaders themselves brutally intoxicated within the very precincts of the temple, and behaving in the most helplessly filthy way (xxviii. 7 f.) ; and if such were

the leaders, is it any wonder that the people followed so alluring a lead—

> "Rising early in the morning
> To follow strong drink,
> Tarrying late into the night,
> Till wine inflame them,"

carousing till they grew in very truth *blind* drunk —blind to the reality of the unseen, blind to the gravity of the tremendous issues which Jahweh was thrusting upon them in those critical days?

> "But they behold not the doing of Jahweh,
> They see not the work of His hands" (v. 11 f.).

With their bleared eyes they could not *see* the thing He was doing, so He sobers them by summoning His terrible army from afar. He raises His banner as a rendezvous, and whistles—how graphic!—to His foreign warrior-servants at the ends of the earth, and

> "See! hastily, swiftly they come,
> None weary, none stumbling among them.
> The band of their loins never loosed,
> The thong of their shoes never torn.
> Their arrows are sharpened,
> Their bows are all bent,
> The hoofs of their horses are counted as flint,
> And their wheels as the whirlwind.
> Their roar is like that of the lioness,
> And like the young lions they roar,
> Thundering, seizing the prey,
> And bearing it off to a place of security" (v. 26–29.).

The connection is only too plain. The Assyrian army, which moves like a living thing through these magnificent lines, is brought to punish the national sins. The injustice of the men and the frivolity of the women, who turn their eyes coquettishly upon the passers-by, as they trip with outstretched neck and

mincing steps and tinkling anklets along the fashionable streets of Jerusalem (iii. 16)—these are the things that provoke those glorious eyes (iii. 8), and compel the Lord of Hosts to uplift His terrible Arm (v. 25) and smite their rotten national life down to its foundations, revealing to them once for all the things that matter. Again and again Isaiah comes back to this thought of the moral meaning of war. Judah he regards as a nation of rebels (i. 2), a veritable people of Gomorrah led by rulers of Sodom (i. 10), with whom Jahweh is justly indignant, and the Assyrian is the rod with which He smites the apostates and executes His wrath upon them.

"Ho, Assyrian! the rod of Mine anger,
And the staff of Mine indignation!
I will send him against a profane nation,
And against the people with whom I am angry I will give him a charge,
To take the spoil, and to seize the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets" (x. 5 f.).

(ii). But deeper than the function of war as a penalty is its mission as a call. Its divinely intended purpose is that the people "should return unto Him that smote them, and seek Jahweh of Hosts" (ix. 13). To some extent this function was indeed fulfilled. The desolated country-side, the cities burned with fire, the land devoured by strangers, the capital isolated and invested by the foe, had led her to seek the Lord in bitter earnest and with an almost desperate energy—with a multitude of sacrifices, a superabundance of rams and bullocks and goats, a thronging of the sacred courts with anxious eager feet, a passionate outstretching of the hands in prayer (i. 11 ff.). All this, however, was but a ritual response, and it was a moral response that the holy God demanded; and this moral response is just the very thing which the

protracted horrors of was are calculated to elicit. More than most things is the "hail" of war fitted to "sweep away the refuge of lies" (xxviii. 17)—whether insecure political alliances or a religion composed of ritual and lip-worship (xxix. 13)—and lay bare the moral foundations of human society.

Isaiah is impressed and saddened, as he enters upon his ministry, by the seemingly impenetrable indifference of the people. The more earnestly he preaches, the more callous and irresponsive do they become, the duller grow their ears, the blinder their eyes, the "fatter" their hearts (vi. 9 f.). Sorrowfully the young prophet asks "How long?" How long is this irresponsiveness to continue? And he gets for answer:

> "Until they be wasted,
> Towns without people,
> Houses without men,
> And the ground be left desolate,
> And Jahweh remove men afar,
> And the derelict places be many" (vi. 11 f.).

In other words war, if it is only terrible enough—if it crosses our own borders with the gleam of sharp swords and the trail of fire and smoke and desolation—will do more to rouse an apathetic people to a sense of the ultimate Realities than the most winning appeals or the sternest warnings of the preacher. When the people hear Assyrian spoken in the streets of Jerusalem (xxviii. 11), when the enemy drives home with the point of his bloody sword the lesson Jahweh had commanded him to teach, then perhaps the callousness and the mockery (xxviii. 9 f.) would cease, and Jerusalem would be in a fair way to becoming the City of Righteousness, the Faithful Town (i. 26).

The True Attitude to War

It is easy to infer from all this what will be Isaiah's attitude to war. He meets it with the solemn respect due to one of Jahweh's awful ministers, sent to do His pleasure. He faces it with quiet heart, because he believes that it not only does not lie beyond the control of God, but that it is directly contributory to His purpose of rebuking pride, of confronting men with reality, of turning them to Himself. By one who regarded war as drawn within the sweep of the divine purpose, it could be contemplated with as much equanimity as any other and less terrible exhibition of that purpose. On more than one historic occasion, when, under the strain of actual or prospective siege, the hearts of men were quivering as leaves before the wind, the sublime serenity of Isaiah stands out with marvellous distinctness—his is the one steady heart in Jerusalem; and it was these occasions, too, that stirred him to the most trenchant and memorable expressions of his faith. Near the beginning of his ministry, when the coalition of Aram and Israel was threatening Jerusalem, Isaiah went out with his little boy Shear-jashub—man and child alike, by their very names, incarnate gospels, though neither should utter a word—to impart to the anxious Ahaz some of the steadiness that filled his own soul (vii. 1–9). He begins, "Take heed and keep quiet, don't be afraid or faint-hearted. If Aram and Israel have their plans, Jahweh has His"—*He also* is wise, as he says, with superb simplicity, in another place (xxxi. 2)—and he ends with the great words (more barbed and memorable to a Hebrew ear than would seem from our ordinary translations) which carry the secret of all serenity in moments of panic or peril:

No faith, no fixity, or as Professor Badè has recently rendered them, *No confiding, no abiding.*[1] Trust in God shows itself in the quiet heart; one fruit of faith is peace. *Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God.* It is not for nothing that chapter vii. follows chapter vi. Isaiah began his ministry with a vision of God upon the throne of the universe—the King immortal, invisible, abiding when Uzziah dies, and earthly kings and empires change and pass; and with this steadying vision of the King in his heart, he goes forth with serenity to face his first great crisis in the person of Ahaz, and every other subsequent crisis of his life. He is "established" (vii. 9), because he believes in the unseen: the heart of Ahaz, the mere politician, is disestablished.

Thirty years later, when certain politicians were intriguing for the help of Egypt against Assyria, as Ahaz had schemed for the support of Assyria against Aram and Israel, a similar situation strikes from the prophet that other immortal word, "In quietness and trust shall be your strength" (xxx. 15). The kaleidoscopic transformations in the politics of the near East did not and could not disquiet the heart that believed that God was on the throne. Just as the wisest general is he who recognizes the moral as well as the material factors in his campaign, so the wisest statesman is he who recognizes that above and beyond the adroitest balancing of political factors is *One who also is wise,* who also has His plans and purposes, the God who is the great and everlasting Fact, and whose holy will in every crisis is the thing to be most seriously considered. To leave Him out of the reckoning in political or even military preparations is the most pathetic and fatal of all human follies.

[1] *The Old Testament in the Light of To-day,* p. 183.

" Ye looked to the arms in the House of the Forest,
Ye had eyes for the gaps in the Fortress of David ;
But ye looked not to Him that was doing all this,
Ye had no eyes for Him who had planned it of old " (xxii. 8-11).

It is this emphasis upon the material and this ignoring of the spiritual order (xxxi. 3), this jaunty indifference to God which allies itself so naturally with indulgence and frivolity,

" Eating flesh and drinking wine :
' Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' "

—it is these things that cause the tears to stream down Isaiah's averted face, and that extort from him his mournful word of doom, " This sin of yours shall never be expiated, until ye die " (xxii. 1–14).

But one, like Isaiah, who through all the confusions of history had seen the King and who believed in the triumph of His royal purpose, could face the gravest complications of international politics with something of the serenity of his unseen Lord. Of the great Powers of those days and of these, He was, and is, the greatest Power. In human history He is the great Conspirator : [1] " let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." He who fears Him will fear no other. He has His mighty purpose, which embraces the whole world, and which no human power can ultimately thwart or annul.

" This is the purpose formed
To humble all the earth ;
And this is the Hand outstretched
Against the nations all.
For who can bring to nought
What Jehovah of Hosts hath purposed ?
And when His is the Hand that is outstretched,
Who can turn it back ? " (xiv. 26 f.).

Is it any wonder that the man who worshipped such a God should have preserved the steady heart ? The

[1] viii. 13 (by a very simple emendation of the text).

majestic confidence with which Isaiah confronts a fateful international issue created by the arrival of Ethiopian ambassadors in Jerusalem is but a reflex of the serenity with which his God contemplates it all. Jahweh and His prophet look quietly on, still as the shimmering heat in sunshine when the glow is intense, or as the high motionless clouds in the heat of harvest (xviii. 4)—two pictures beautifully suggestive of sublime, unruffled peace.

The heart may well be quiet; the purpose cannot fail, for behind it is God. As the world is the arena of His purpose and resplendent with His glory (vi. 3), so history is nothing but the gradual evolution of that purpose, and every earthly power is but His tool which, willingly or unwillingly, must become contributory to its accomplishment. With his brutal military methods, the Assyrian may proudly work his cruel and terrible will upon the weaker nations of the world, whom he harries as a boy harries a bird's nest (x. 14); but in reality he is nothing but a tool in Jahweh's hand, an instrument with which His holy omnipotent will is done (x. 5); and he, too, when he has played his predetermined part, will one day, for his pride and cruelty, be shattered by the Arm that is infinitely mightier than his own (x. 33 f.). This, then, "is the rest and this the refreshing" (xxviii. 12)—quiet trust in God as the Lord of history.

As a patriot, Isaiah could contemplate the changing fortunes of Israel with all the more equanimity, as he believed that, in spite of her sin, which was to meet with judgment sharp and sure, she yet held a place of transcendent importance in the purpose of God for the world. This belief, expressed with greater emphasis and variety by his great anonymous successor in the exile, and amply justified by history,

is already firmly held by Isaiah. At that particular stage in the religious education of the world, it was divinely necessary that Jerusalem and all that she stood for should not perish, as Samaria had perished in 721 B.C. With the full consciousness that in some unique sense Jahweh of Hosts did indeed dwell in Zion (viii. 18), the prophet strengthened the heart of the despairing Hezekiah, when Assyrian hosts were menacing Jerusalem, by hurling his defiant taunt-song against the proud Sennacherib :

" With scornful laughter Zion's daughter greets thee,
Thee who hast blasphemed Israel's holy God.
Proudly thou boastest no land can resist thee ;
Though all the while thou art but Jahweh's tool,
Working His ancient purpose on the nations.
Yea, all thy doings are before Mine eyes,
And for thy rage and insolence I'll tame thee—
Hook in thy nose and bridle in thy lips—
And bring thee back the very way thou camest" (xxxvii. 22–29).

For the time being Zion, all unworthy as she was, was spared ; and the work Isaiah had once hoped she would have done in her corporate capacity as a " city of righteousness, a faithful town," is now to be done within her walls by a few elect souls—men like Isaiah himself—who put character and faith before all things else in the world. They are the sure and precious stone on which the community of the future may be securely founded (xxviii. 16) ; and when, in the passing of the years, the doom of political extinction fell upon Israel, it was these men—the disciples and successors of Isaiah—and not the scoffing politicians " that rule this people " (xxviii. 14)—who gave her her imperishable place in the annals of human history. The earthly kingdom passed, but these men founded the heavenly Jerusalem, who is the mother of us all.

Peace

Though, in the Providence of God, war may have an educative and even a redemptive purpose, the ideal of human society must be peace. War may be inevitable "because of the hardness of your hearts," but it belongs to those things which are to pass in the latter days. According to an oracle which, whether Isaiah's or not, unquestionably represents his spirit, "it shall come to pass in the issue of the days, that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (ii. 1–4). Nations which have disputes to settle, instead of appealing to the arbitrament of sword and spear, are represented as resorting to Jerusalem, and as securing there a decision so just and satisfactory to all that they immediately and permanently disarm. This consummation presupposes a world of reasonable and religious men, willing to submit their disputes to the arbitration of an impartial tribunal. It is worth noting that the city which in this oracle is accorded the high honour of dispensing international justice is a city which has already secured justice for all the citizens within her own walls. There is no more exploitation of the poor, indeed there will be no poor to exploit, but she will be in truth the "City of Righteousness, the Faithful Town" (i. 26). A nation which professes to be eager to see justice done abroad in the great world must be willing to do it and to see it done at home.

But to come back—the ideal is one of peace. The Prince of the latter days, whose second name is *Hero of Superhuman Might*, bears as His final name *The Prince of Peace* (ix. 5 [E.V. 6]). The true patriot longs for the day when no more war-horses and chariots (ii. 7) will be seen in the land he loves, but when from

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF

end to end it will be filled with the knowledge of Jahweh as the waters cover the sea (xi. 9). One of the dearest wishes of his heart is to see the cruel and bloody accoutrements of war flung once and for ever into the devouring flames. He looks for and believingly works for the day when

> "Every boot of the warrior that thundered along,
> And every garment rolled in blood,
> Shall be doomed to the burning,
> And fuel for the fire" (ix. 4 [E.V. 5]).

XVI

A PLEA FOR THE HERETIC [1]

We hear much to-day of reconstruction in industrial, economic, political, social life. This reconstruction is likely enough to extend to philosophy and theology, which, when they are alive, are always in intimate touch with contemporary life and thought. But such reconstruction is nothing new: it is inevitable where thinkers are awake and in earnest. It is as old as the Book of Job, which is certainly the most brilliant, as it is one of the most passionate, challenges ever hurled at the conventions of contemporary orthodoxy, and one of the bravest calls to a larger and more generous vision.

Job heaps upon his miserable comforters ineffable scorn. Why? Who is he, and who are they? He is a man with a problem, and they are men who think they have the key to it. Both he and they had been taught to believe that goodness is rewarded by prosperity, and wickedness punished with disaster. It was a delightfully simple creed, but it had one fatal defect —that it was not true: at least not inevitably and universally true. Job discovered its inadequacy in his own experience. He had lived a blameless and beneficent life, described with much detail in chapters xxix–xxxi.; yet blow after blow of the cruellest kind had fallen, leaving him with nothing that he could call his own but his misery. Health, wealth, happiness, family, friends, all had gone: God Himself seemed to have

[1] From *The Free Churchman*.

gone. The very theory by which Job had lived had been shattered to pieces, and he sits upon his ash-heap, in agony of body and soul, with no ray of an explanation to comfort him.

But his three friends, though vexed, are not puzzled. They stand outside Job's sorrow, not within it; and average people do not allow themselves to be puzzled by what is to them, after all, only a spectacle and not an experience. They are as sure of their theories as of the facts, and with no misgiving they bring the one to interpret the other. Their theory was that men get what they deserve; the fact was that Job had suffered very grievously: no other conclusion was therefore possible than that he deserved to suffer as he did, and that, if his sin was not obvious, it was was none the less real—perhaps all the more dreadful that it had been so cunningly concealed. Sometimes another view of suffering shines through, as in Eliphaz's hint that it may be disciplinary (v. 17 f.); but in the main the fortunes of men are explained, and held to be adequately explained, on the retributive principle. The friends can take no other view than that Job is a guilty sinner: they are driven to this estimate alike by the sight of his misery—for God does not bring these things upon men for nothing—and by the passion, the fury, the all but blasphemy of his speeches: for the patience attributed to Job since the days of St. James refers to his endurance, not to any silent and humble acquiescence in the tortures of his fate. Of this he shows no trace at all, so long as he is face to face with his friends.

Job and his friends stand for opposite attitudes to life and its problems—the original and the conventional. The contrast comes out in the words of stern dignity which Jehovah speaks in the Epilogue to the friends: "My wrath is kindled against thee

and thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath" (xlii. 7). Now, the amazing thing is this, that even the most cursory examination of the speeches of Job and his friends reveals the fact that while they are always reverent and conventionally correct, he is always daring, sometimes almost to the point of irreverence and impiety; the friends indeed accuse him directly of this (xv. 4). Job parodies the eighth psalm (vii. 17 f.), he swears by "God Almighty, who hath wronged and embittered my soul" (xxvii. 2), he denies the existence of a moral order in the world —"He (*i.e.*, God) destroyeth the innocent and the guilty alike: if it be not He, who then?" (ix. 21–24) —and in chapter xxi. he hurls a sustained and furious challenge at the existing order of things, the very thought of which, he tells us, makes him shudder (xxi. 6). How can it be that in the end the Almighty deliberately condemns the reverent friends and commends the audacious Job, with his scornful and incisive challenges of their orthodoxy?

This leads us to a brief characterization of the friends. We group them together as the friends; but in point of fact, though they have much in common, they are quite distinct, so distinct that if the drama were staged, there would be no danger of confusing the actors with each other. Eliphaz is an old man, considerably older than Job, a man who has had strange religious "experiences" which have left their mark upon him, a skilful orator who knows how to begin with words of honeyed courtesy (iv. 2) and to end with a vision of hope (v. 19–27): he rests his case upon "revelation" (iv. 12–21). Bildad appears to be a man in middle life, of a timid and thoroughly conventional type, who makes his appeal to tradition; the world-problem, he confesses, is too vast for him

and his contemporaries, but it has already been solved by the men of the olden time, and wise men will do well to abide by what they have said (viii. 8 f.). Zophar is a young man, of coarse and insolent type, even more incapable, if possible, than the others of understanding the complex emotions which seethe and clash in the soul of Job. He is the incarnation of a certain rough common sense, which has little appreciation of the gravity of the problem, but thinks to dispose of it by flippancy, by elaborate pictures, by pungent proverbs (xi. 12).

Different and distinguishable as they are, however, the friends have much in common; and it is the qualities that they share together that help us to realize the solitary grandeur of the hero to whom they are all alike opposed, and the dead weight of cruel opposition by which progressive souls such as he are apt to be confronted. For one thing, they are all thoroughly conventional in their outlook: there is no streak of audacity in their mind. They are intellectually timid, afraid of new thoughts and new movements, afraid for the future of systems into which these thoughts may be introduced, or of institutions in which these movements may be allowed to ferment. Their motto is "Safety first," and they have not wit enough to see that the only real safety is the truth, as reached by unfettered and unbiassed inquiry. Refusing to move their own minds, they can only make their humble but essentially helpless appeal to the findings of the fathers (viii. 8–10, xv. 17 ff.), and they are especially afraid of the infiltration —contamination they would call it—of foreign influence into native thought (xv. 19). How different is Job! With what splended courage he asserts his intellectual independence. He is willing to learn from men who have travelled beyond the borders

of national idiosyncrasy, men who have enlarged their experience by the sight of other lands and other types (xxi. 29 ff.); but whatever he experiences or assimilates, he must retain his intellectual integrity and independence. As every man's palate tastes for itself, so must every man's mind test for itself the flavour of the world (xii. 11) and fearlessly record its independent judgment. This may issue in the modification, sometimes in the practical annihilation, of systems hoary with age. But that does not matter: the only thing that matters is the Truth. In one powerful passage, Job reminds his friends that God needs no man to distort the facts in His behalf: He is honoured best and alone by the truth (xiii. 7–12).

The difference between Job and his frieods is, broadly, that his interest is religion, while theirs is theology: they care—with their minds—for the theory; he cares—with all his soul—for the fact of God: they are concerned with the system of things, his supreme concern is for the friendship of God. "Oh that I knew where I might find *Him*" (xxiii. 3)—that is the longing of his perplexed and bleeding heart, and we can imagine with what rapture he would have welcomed Him who said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." It is this passionately personal quality of Job's religion that keeps his mind so intensely alive; while the friends are marking time, repeating themselves and borrowing from one another, Job is marching on. The friends are never troubled by the great and dazzling thoughts, *e.g.* about death and the future, which perpetually sting the mind of Job. They live under a leaden sky: Job strides on through a darkness illumined ever and anon by gleams of heavenly light, till in the end he finds himself within a world bathed from end to end

in the light and the love of God (xxxviii. f.). In God Job lives and *moves*. Job stands for movement, for progress, for criticism, for reconstruction; the friends stand for the *status quo*. But where there is life, there ought to be movement; and where there is no movement, no challenge, no daring, no impulse to push out and on, nothing but a stolid acquiescence with the past, a sleepy deference to the pronouncements of former generations, a stupid refusal to think new thoughts and achieve new conquests in the realms of thought or activity, there is nothing worthy of the name of life.

One fundamental defect of the friends, as of all conventional people, is their lack of imagination. "If your soul were in my soul's stead," says Job in one place (xvi. 4). That is why, for all their desire to help him, they can be so cutting and so cruel. They have no idea of the complexity of the soul and of the world, or of the inevitable inadequacy of all systems which attempt to explain the one or the other. The friends are not bad men, but only average, conventional men, unimaginative, unoriginal, and hostile to all that savours of intellectual daring, imagination, originality. But though not wicked, such men can, by their obstruction and timidity, work infinite havoc in a world whose progress depends upon vision, upon courage, upon the spirit that presses cheerfully on to the things that are before. It is men like these, the slaves of intellectual and religious convention, who all down the ages have hampered the search for truth and hindered the progress of true religion: it is men like these who threatened Galileo, who slew the prophets, burned the martyrs, and brought Christ to His cross. When we remember these things, we begin to understand the Epilogue, with its reiterated commendation of the intrepid Job,

and its indignant condemnation of his timid and conventional friends. It was not the friends who said the correct things, but the man who said the terrible things in the desperate honesty of his soul, that won from the Lord the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." The attitude of the friends is always thoroughly conventional: Job is original and emancipating.

XVII

THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PROPHETS[1]

We must not expect too much from our study of the prophetic attitude to social questions. The society addressed by the Hebrew prophets was, in many important respects, as different as it could be from the infinitely complex society of to-day, and we must not seek from them any solution of our special problems. They were not professors of political economy. But their value lies just in this, that they deal with the fundamental principles on which all society rests; for these principles are moral.

The prophets were primarily preachers, not social reformers; to them the real solution of the social problem was the religious solution. If men cared for God—"knew Him," as the prophets say—if their lives were rooted in religion, then every relationship of man to man would be controlled by moral considerations, and social problems, while they would not disappear, would lose all of their tragedy, and much of their keenness. But there lay the difficulty, as the prophets complain. Religion in the true sense (Amos v. 24; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 6–8) did not have its proper place in the national life. The materialistic spirit came in with Solomon; and Israel's subsequent history may be regarded as an unceasing conflict between that materialism and the moral idealism which was proclaimed by, and embodied in, the prophets.

[1] From *The Westminster* (Toronto).

But, though idealists, the prophets were not dreamers, nor, in a bad sense, "other-worldly"; it is the prayer and the task of their lives to have their ideas realized in society. Their vision of God did not blind them to the needs of their own day—rather it illumined those needs. The prophets were not politicians, yet they influenced politics; Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, all left their mark upon political history. The Hebrew prophet was anything but a recluse. He could read the signs of the times. He was practical in the deepest sense of all, because his solution of the problem went to the root. The prophets speak always with full knowledge and in full view of the historical situation, of which none were keener observers than they; but they address themselves to that situation on its moral and religious rather than on its social and political side. To Jehovah Israel owed her national existence and the land she loved so dearly, and the whole of the prophet's ministry was a ceaseless effort to recall the wandering people to their God.

This God was a God whose will was expressed in a moral demand upon men, and society could only be regenerated by a sincere recognition of Him. The unfaithfulness of its members towards each other sprang, according to the prophets, from forgetfulness of their common God. If society was to be made better, the men who composed it must be made better. The root of the social problem was not so much defective social arrangement as sin. No fundamental improvement could be effected by a change in the environment, but only by a change in the men.

And all men needed this change; for, as Jeremiah plainly saw, it was the heart itself that was corrupt (xvii. 9). Therefore it was impossible that the pro-

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

phets could take the side of one class against another. Amos is no party leader—he is alone (chap. vii). It would be easy to make it appear that the protest of the prophets was against the leaders of society (*cf.* Mic. iii. 1 ff.) and that they were the champions of the poor. Indeed, there is a certain measure of truth in such a view. There is no more democratic book in the world than the Old Testament, and the poor man has never had a better friend than the Hebrew prophets. All the same, it is no more true of the prophets, as a class, that they championed the poor, because they were poor, than it is true of Jesus. The judge is not to respect the person of the poor any more than of the rich (Lev. xix. 15). The prophets did not side with poor against rich, but with right against wrong. They maintained their independence. It was moral distinctions, not class distinctions, that mattered to them. They were reformers, if you like; but it was the men and not the situation that they sought to reform. The reformed men could be trusted to reform the situation, and men were re-formed in God—by returning to Him.

It would, of course, be idle to deny that a man's character is, or may be, affected by his material position; great riches and great poverty alike imperil the moral life (*cf.* Prov. xxx. 8, 9). In the case of the average man, that life is safest where material provision is moderate, though it may find its noblest expression where material resources are very low (*cf.* Hab. iii. 17, 18). In early Hebrew society there was little room for the extremes of wealth and poverty. The danger began with the rise of opportunities for trade under Solomon; and once the passion for gain was born, it was not long before that passion learned to satisfy itself in unscrupulous and violent ways. A famous instance is the story of Ahab's

judicial murder of Naboth, on the instigation of Jezebel, in order to secure his vineyard (1 Kings xxi.). The story illustrates many things—the close attachment of the Hebrew peasant to his ancestral land (1 Kings xxi. 3), the avarice and unscrupulous cruelty with which the defenceless were driven from their property by men of power, and lastly, the Hebrew prophet's courageous and remorseless championship of justice. It was the murder of a peasant and not the crime of idolatry that cost Ahab his dynasty.

It would be impossible in one chapter to discuss with any elaboration the social teaching of the individual prophets. Rather, however, than lose ourselves in vague generalities, it may be well to deal more particularly with two or three, and this will enable us to see how deeply they shared certain fundamental beliefs.

Let us begin with Amos, the first, in time, of the literary prophets. It is easy to do less than justice to Amos's criticism of the social situation in his day. We may glibly dispose of it by asserting that it is the criticism of an unsympathetic and rustic mind which found the ideal life in the simple desert tent, and had no appreciation of cities and the civilization which they imply. Certainly Amos would have given a very small place, under any circumstances, to silken cushions and ivory couches (vi. 4); the shepherd, happy in his tent, would have little but contempt for those who indulged in the luxury of winter-houses and summer-houses (iii. 15). But Amos's estimate is not to be so easily disposed of, for it is a moral estimate, the estimate of a man to whom righteousness was the supreme thing in the universe. He hates the "palaces" (vi. 8) because they cost too dear; they cost the character of the rich and the happiness of the poor. The fundamental charge he

brings against his contemporaries, especially those in high position, is that "they do not know how to do the thing that is straight" (iii. 10). The money with which the fine houses are built is, for the most part, procured unjustly. The judges accept bribes, the merchants cheat (viii. 5), the poor are the victims of heavy taxation (v. 11). There is a religion, but it is exhausted in ritual (iv. 4 f.), it is the religion of men who hate the Sabbath day (viii. 5).

Note (i) That Amos's solution is a religious solution: "Seek Me" (v. 4, 6). The people are plunging headlong into ruin, but "seek ye Me, and ye shall live." So long as men are intent only on their own gain, never lifting up their eyes to the gigantic processes of nature and history, and never allowing their hearts to be impressed by the God who is behind them both, no solution is possible.

(ii). The solution is to be found in religion—a religion, however, which expresses itself not in ritual ("Seek Me, but seek not Bethel," v. 4 f.), but in justice as between man and man. It is very significant that Amos co-ordinates the search for God with the search for social justice (v. 6, 14 f.). He does not mean that justice is co-extensive with God, but that it is essential to God. A religion worth anything must insist upon that. "Let justice roll down like waters" (v. 24) on and on, cleansing and unimpeded, like the waves of the sea. Justice towards our fellows, Amos holds, is the true service of God. He does not tinker with the situation. What the poor need is not charity, but justice.

(iii). This broad sense of justice is written upon the universal conscience. It may indeed be supported and illuminated by appeals to Scripture, but it existed before Scripture and can be appealed to independently of it.

Amos does not fully explain what he means by justice, partly because he presupposes a knowledge of it and the capability of a response to it on the part of every human being. The law of justice is written upon the universal heart (chaps. i. and ii.). Israel ought to be familiar with it, because heathen peoples, like the Philistines and the Egyptians, are (iii. 9). The watchwords of Amos are God, justice, and conscience.

From Amos we turn to his contemporary and successor, Hosea. At first sight it would seem that his contribution to the discussion of the problem we are considering must be very slight. Nobody was ever less like the conventional social reformer than he. Though he sometimes flashes out in words even more terrible than those of Amos, he has the heart of a woman; he was the gentlest of Israel's prophets. Besides, from every page of his book rises the conviction that the situation was desperate—it was one of political and moral chaos (iv. 2; x. 4; vi. 4), and the end must be speedy destruction (xiii. 14). At such a time a programme of social reform may well have seemed an irony.

Yet Hosea's diagnosis of the situation has elements of permanent value for social reconstruction. (i). He fastens the responsibility for the situation, to a large extent, upon the religious leaders. Doubtless every corrupt member of society has his share of responsibility for the general corruption, and nothing must be done to weaken the sense of individual responsibility, by charging the guilt upon the leaders; yet the leaders have undoubtedly a special responsibility —especially the leaders of religion. The political leaders were worthless and impotent (xiii. 10, x. 7), but more serious still were the incompetence and unfaithfulness of the priests (*cf.* v. 1). "Like people, like priest" (iv. 9). Hosea traces the immorality

of his day, the perjury, murder, theft, adultery, to ignorance of God (iv. 1, 2), and for the impartation of the knowledge of God the priests are, of course, supremely responsible.

(ii). What was this knowledge of God? It was knowledge of Him as the giver of their temporal prosperity (ii. 8), as the moulder of their history (xi. 1–4), as the lord and arbiter of the social laws which will bring destruction upon those who violate them (v. 12), as the God whose will is also expressed in the form of a written law which Israel ignores (viii. 12). This, then, is the knowledge of God which the clergy are bound to bring to bear upon the conscience of the people—a God from whom comes every good thing we enjoy, and to whom His worshippers must respond not in a ritual but a moral service; a God who controls history in moral interests, and who will grind to the dust the nation that defies moral law; a God whose will is written in a Bible as well as in history.

(iii). The divine demand is for love, mercy, kindness. It is by kindness to men and not by rite and ceremony that God is most adequately served. In the famous passage in vi. 6, quoted more than once by our Saviour, kindness is paralleled with the knowledge of God .And this is Hosea's great contribution to the social problem —his insistence upon kindness. This love, kindness, or mercy is the deepest thing in the character of God; it is illustrated in His early dealings with the people whom He drew with cords of love (xi. 4), and this is the type of love which each Israelite owes the other—such a love as was offered by Hosea to his erring wife.

From Hosea we pass, omitting some figures of great importance, to Jeremiah, the prophet whose spirit was, in many ways, so kindred to his own. He,

too, lonely and tender-hearted as he was, and facing a situation more than usually gloomy and hopeless, might seem destined to play but an insignificant part in the regeneration of society. In point of fact, no prophet made a greater contribution to Hebrew religion than he, and it is just this contribution which gives his book its supreme value for the reconstruction of society.

(i). For one thing, Jeremiah diagnosed adequately, for the first time, the real malady of society as the evil of the human heart itself. Other prophets may have felt this; it is the merit of Jeremiah that he said it, and the man who says a thing well helps us to see it better. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and diseased beyond remedy" (xvii. 9), and a new heart is necessary. It is out of the heart that evil things proceed. This is a great and fruitful thought. Environment counts, but it is not the fundamental thing. The one thing needful is a change, not in the outer situation, but in the inner. The true preacher, recognizing this, will take care that his preaching has more to do with the formation of character than with specific proposals for the reconstruction of society.

(ii). Another contribution closely connected with this, is Jeremiah's discovery of the value of personality. In asserting that the heart is corrupt, Jeremiah is making a statement which is at once universal and individual, indeed universal because individual. Each human heart is corrupt, and the golden age will be the age in which the law is written on the heart, and every man, the least and greatest alike, will know God for himself (xxxi. 33 f.). That means that every man has a direct and indefeasible value in the sight of God. In other words, the fundamental solution of the social problem is the recognition of

the value of personality. This will not indeed secure an instantaneous solution of any specific problem, but it gives us the right attitude to all problems, and rules out many a current solution, in which men are regarded as tools and the helpless exist to be exploited, as unworthy and impossible.

It would be interesting to trace the argument through Ezekiel, and to show the great place which he assigns to the Church in the society to be. To this, indeed, he devotes the last nine chapters of his book. The ideal city must have a temple, and it is from the river that flows from under the threshold of the temple that life and healing are to come to the world (xlvii. 9)—Ezekiel's way of saying that the function of the Church is to bless the world. But this, and many other interesting and significant elements in the prophetic teaching, such as Malachi's insistence upon the maintenance of the marriage bond (ii. 14) and the purity of the family, must be passed over.

Generally speaking, the ideal of the prophets might be summed up in one word—brotherhood. As children of one God (Isaiah i. 2) the people were brothers, one of another. The bearing of this simple fact, which would no doubt have been theoretically admitted by all, is manifold. For example, men who are brethren will not exploit one another—certainly not by foul means, but not even by means that are legally fair. All kinds of fraudulent practice, commercial dishonesty, would disappear. The person, the property, the honour of every citizen, without regard to his social position, would be respected; slavery, cruelty, calumny would die a speedy death. The prophetic ideal is that of a society of brothers, living at peace in a fruitful land, in comfort and security, dealing with each other in a

spirit of love, and serving their God with humility through the faithful discharge of their social obligations.

Sometimes one gets the impression that the prophets detested the city, though it is usually difficult to say whether it is the city itself or only her sins that they detest. The horror of the city was natural to men who were descendants of nomads, and who loved the sheep and the silence of the wilderness. But for others the earthly city, with its diversified and concentrated life, seemed an adumbration of the City of God. "Even in a palace life may be led well." To Isaiah, who spent his life in the capital, the city was dear; in the future, as he conceived it, the city would not be abolished, but redeemed (i. 27). But after all, the service which God requires of men is independent of outward political and social forms; it can be rendered in city and country alike. For, in the great words of Micah (vi. 6–8), it is a moral service—to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. In the effort to solve our social problems, justice and kindness are the paramount considerations; and for these a humble walk with God is the most effective guarantee.

The work of the prophets is so profound because it recognizes so completely that men are not merely creatures to be warmed and fed, but creatures of intellectual, moral, and religious capacity. The laws which govern production and consumption, supply and demand, deserve the closest and most earnest study we can give to them. But the work of social reformers who allow themselves to forget that, though man lives by bread, he does not live by bread alone, will in the long run be, not perhaps nugatory, but far from adequate; for it fails to understand the

man it would reform. The work of the prophets is of permanent value because it is built upon the clear recognition of the fact that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

XVIII

THE PSALTER AND THE PRESENT DISTRESS [1]

To-day [2] we are being swept along by forces which we can neither persuade nor control, and there are moods in which we almost permit ourselves to be convinced of what someone has rather cynically called the futility of all human discussion. Yet the man who has nothing to say to the sorrows and the horror, the tragedy and the welter of the world to-day, has nothing to say at all: for what are they but the general sorrows and tragedies of men "writ large"? The mystery we face and the burden we carry to-day is, though doubtless on a stupendous scale, the mystery and the burden which men have borne from the beginning. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; but so is man, so also is human life. We are not "the first that ever burst" into this tempestuous sea. The men who wrote the Psalms and the men who all down the ages have sung them were tossed upon it too; and it is just here that the Psalter can render us its inestimable service. It was out of the depths of a sorrow as keen as ours that the Psalmists cried to God, and the deep of our experience answers to the deep of theirs. They knew what was in man, and that is why they find us to-day. They knew the strangeness and the sorrow of life, but amidst it all they also

[1] From *The Expository Times*.

[2] This was written during the war, but the message of the Psalter is as relevant now as then.

knew God to be their Shelter and their Strength. Never have there been men who felt the pathos of life more keenly. It was to them a mystery, and they knew that by searching they could never fully find it out, but they sought like the brave men they were, till sometimes their hearts grew bitter and throbbed with pain (Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3, 16, 21). They voice that "sense of tears in mortal things" which is felt by all who look with fearless eyes at the pain and surprises of life. They exhaust the range of metaphor in trying to express their sense of its frailty. It is like the grass or the meadow-flower, like a passing shadow, like a dark night, like a breath that passes and never returns. And the enemies are there too. Throughout the whole length of the Psalter, and even in the briefest and the gentlest Psalms like the twenty-third, you can hear their stealthy tread and listen to their venomous words: and ever and anon there falls upon the ear the sob of a breaking heart that longs to fly away and be at rest and lodge in the wilderness, far from the stormy wind and tempest (lv. 6 f.).

In such a world, or at least with such a mood upon them, the Psalmists feel their homelessness: they are but pilgrims and strangers in the earth. They suffer and they toil, rising early and sitting down late to the evening meal and eating the bread of sorrows (cxxvii. 2). They have no hope or comfort but in God; but in Him they can rest like a weaned child on the bosom of his mother (cxxxi. 2). Small wonder that the words of men, who looked into life with such stern sorrow in their eyes, should have found all through the centuries an echo in the hearts of other men bowed by the weight of grief or persecution or war. In all times of distress, when men and nations were walking through the valley

of the deep shadow, their words have been a comfort and an inspiration—to men like the Huguenots, the Covenanters, and many another in their grim battles for justice and for freedom. The well of the Psalter is very deep, and we, like these men, may draw from it. Indeed, it is not so much a well as a river, whose streams through many an age have made glad the city of God.

The world of the Psalmists was a world of conflict —of peril, darkness, and tragedy; but through their darkness flashed rays of the heavenly light, or we might more truly say that their darkness was pierced by a mild yet steady light which not seldom shone so brightly as to chase it all away. For, as the darkness and the light are both alike to God, so the Psalmists, each in his own measure, tasted something of that divine superiority to the chances and changes of human fortune. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed" (lvii. 7). They are not afraid though the mountains be torn up by the roots and flung into the sea. If only Almighty God is with them, how can flesh harm them (lvi. 4)? So with quiet hearts they lie down amid perils (iv. 8) refreshed and sustained by the God who never slumbers nor sleeps (cxxi. 4).

The despondency and sorrow which crush so many a heart to-day had already been felt and voiced by the singers of the olden time—by men who asked:

> "Is His love clean vanished for ever?
> Is His faithfulness utterly gone?
> Hath God forgotten to be gracious,
> Or in anger shut up His compassion?" (lxxvii.: 8 f.).[1]

They have been voiced by men who say:

---

[1] The translations I have taken from my *Psalms in Modern Speech* (Jas. Clarke & Co.).

" My spirit is faint within me,
My heart is bewildered within me.
I remember the days of old,
And brood over all Thou hast done " (cxliii. 4 f.).

In our time, as in the days of the Psalmists, there are men who " fret themselves because of evil-doers and of the men who bring wicked devices to pass." There are hearts that do not know how to answer the challenge of the sceptic when he asks, " Where is now thy God ? " To-day, as of old, there are those who cry :

" How long shall the wicked, O Lord,
How long shall the wicked exult,
With their blustering arrogant words,
Their braggart and wicked speech,
Crushing Thy people, O Lord,
And afflicting Thy heritage,
Murdering widows and sojourners,
Slaying the fatherless ? " (xciv. 3-6).

There are those whose faith has been staggered till

" Their feet were almost gone,
Their steps had well-nigh slipped " (lxxiii. 2),

and who have been driven to say for a season :

" So I sought to understand it,
But a wearisome task it seemed " (lxxiii. 16).

It is not only, however, that the larger features of those ancient songs are reproduced in the experience of to-day, but even many of the details, though one does not look for details in poetry like the Psalms. The lines which describe the cruel and resolute craft with which the enemies of Israel planned their wars might have been written to-day :

" For see ! Thine enemies roar,
They that hate Thee lift up their head,

Laying crafty plans for Thy people
And plotting against Thy jewels.
'Come, let us blot them out as a nation,
That Israel's name be remembered no more'" (lxxxiii. 2-4).

And then comes the muster of nations from the various parts of that small world, which reminds us of the muster to-day from the ends of the earth:

"For, conspiring with one accord,
They have made a league against Thee—
Tents of Edom and Ishmaelites,
Moab, and the Hagrites,
Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia, with the people of Tyre" (lxxxiii. 5-7).

To-day too, and on a more terrific scale, we have seen

"Kings of the earth conspiring
And rulers consulting together"

to snap the bonds and fling away the cords that bind human society together (ii. 2 f.). To-day, as then, we have the policy of frightfulness. To-day, as then, we have baby-killers, and to-day, as then, there is the thirst for reprisals:

"Happy be he who shall recompense thee
For all thou hast done unto us.
Happy be he who shall seize and dash
Thy children against the rocks" (cxxxvii. 8 f.).

To-day, as then with Edom and Israel, two brother nations are fighting, nations whose languages are closely akin, and the one is saying of the capital city of the other:

"Lay her bare, lay her bare,
Right down to her very foundation" (cxxxvii. 7).

To-day we know something of the terror that flieth by night—a terror all the more terrible that it is not

the creation of nature, but the work of malignant genius. It is a time when

> "Nations roar and kingdoms totter,
> He utters His voice, earth melteth away" (xlvi. 6).

Now, as then, we have the clashing of two cultures. The background of the later Psalms which we know as the Maccabean is the struggle of the Greek and the Hebrew, not very unlike the titanic struggle which is being waged to-day. Then the representatives of the one culture were seeking to impose it by force upon the representatives of the other, and the champions of the spiritual order resisted the encroachment even unto blood. With the "high praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand" (cxlix. 6) they fought to the death, not to extend their culture over nations that resented it, but in defence of their own peculiar life. They did not fight for dominion, but for freedom to live their own life, to exercise their own religion, to preserve the type which had been handed down from the ancient days, and which had made them the distinctive people that they were.

Then, again, we are brought near to the experience of the Psalmists not only by the circumstances of the days in which we live and the struggles which we face, but also by the temper—the fierce and vindictive temper—which is begotten of such struggles. Through many a Psalm breathes the wild and cruel spirit of war:

> "I chased the foe till I caught them,
> And turned not till I made an end of them.
> I smashed them—they could not rise—
> They fell beneath my feet.
> I beat them like dust of the market-place,
> Stamped them like mud of the streets" (xviii. 37 f., 42).

Some of the most brilliant Psalms are songs of praise for victory in war :

" God arises, His enemies scatter ;
They that hate Him flee before Him.
As smoke before wind is driven,
As wax doth melt before fire,
So before God vanish the wicked " (lxviii. 1 f.).

Again :

" Everywhere heathen swarmed round me ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down.
They swarmed, yea, swarmed around me ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down.
They swarmed around me like bees,
They blazed like a fire of thorns ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down " (cxviii. 10-12).

There are pictures not a few of the hideous havoc wrought by war, and it is no accident that these pictures are most detailed and vivid when the havoc was wrought upon the things and the places dear to the religious heart. For nothing so stirred the Jews to sorrowful indignation as the desecration of the holy and beautiful house in which they had worshipped the God of the fathers. They are grieved to the soul when the blood of the saints was poured out like water, and the dead were left for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to devour (lxxix. 2) ; but they were grieved with a sorrow too deep for words when the house of God was defaced or destroyed by the ravages of war : and with the fate of Rheims and many another ancient and famous church before our eyes, we can enter into the sorrowful soul of the Psalmist who lamented :

" Like lions Thine enemies roared through Thy house
Replacing our symbols by signs of their own,
Hacking, like woodsmen that lift
Axes on thickets of trees,

Smashing with hatchets and hammers
All of its carved work together.
They have set Thy temple on fire,
To the very ground they have outraged
The place where dwelleth Thy name.
They have said in their heart, ' Let us utterly smite them.'
They have burned all the houses of God in the land " (lxxiv. 4-8).

In the light of all this it is not so very difficult to understand the passion and the fury with which the outraged heart reacted upon these things. We used to shudder at the imprecatory Psalms, and let us hope we shudder still—for we have not so learned Christ; but we, who have seen in these latter days what antecedently we could never have believed of the horrors and the inhumanities of war, are able to understand those Psalms as they have seldom been understood since the flaming words leaped from torn and bleeding hearts. We could not take their dreadful prayers upon our lips: we could not ask God to feast our eyes upon our foes, or to grant that our feet might be washed in the blood of the wicked. But too well we understand to-day the mood from which such prayers can spring.

" O Lord, Thou God of vengeance,
Thou God of vengeance, shine forth.
Lift Thee up, Thou Judge of the earth,
And pay their deserts to the proud " (xciv. 1 f.).

Perhaps nowhere does this passion of resentment blaze out more fiercely than in the eighty-third Psalm:

" Deal Thou with them as with Sisera,
And with Jabin at the torrent of Kishon,
Who at Endor were destroyed,
And became as dung for the ground.
Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
All their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
Who have said, ' Let us take to ourselves
The dwellings of God in possession.'

Whirl them, my God, like dust,
Like stubble before the wind.
As the fire that kindleth the forest,
As flame that sets mountains ablaze,
So with Thy tempest pursue them,
And terrify them with Thy hurricane.
Fill with dishonour their faces,
That they seek Thy name, O Lord.
Everlasting shame and confusion,
Disgrace and destruction be theirs.
Teach them that Thou alone
Art most high over all the earth" (lxxxiii. 9-18).

These hymns of hate were sung by good men whose hearts were stung by grief and cruelty into bitter vindictiveness. They are not the expression of national spite, they are not a mere cry to the national God to avenge the people who worship Him; they are a cry to the God of all the earth to avenge the moral order of the world, which had been wronged by the cruelty and rapacity of those who are denounced. In essence they are nothing but the vehement expression of a belief in the moral order, and of the desire to see its consummation hastened upon the arena of history. The men whom the Psalmists hate and curse are not cursed as the enemies of Israel, but as the enemies of God and His law: they are those who would dash children against the rocks, the cruel and the proud, who know no pity and no reverence, but who defy God and trample upon the instincts of justice and of mercy which lie deep in the unsophisticated heart.

It ought not to be forgotten, however, that the imprecations of which we have been speaking are not always found upon the lips of those who have so cruelly suffered. From some of those who have suffered most no such word is heard at all. The writer of the forty-second and the forty-third Psalms

prays for deliverance from crafty and crooked foes. "It pierces me to the heart," he tells us,

> "To hear the enemy's taunts,
> As all the day long they say to me,
> 'Where is thy God?'" (xlii. 10).

But he calls down no fire from heaven upon the men who pressed him so hard. "O soul of mine," he simply says,

> "O soul of mine, why art thou downcast?
> And why art thou moaning within me?
> Hope thou in God:
> For yet shall I praise Him,
> My Saviour, my God" (xlii. 11).

There is no suffering in the Psalter so keen as that revealed in the sorrowful words of the twenty-second Psalm—words which our Saviour made His own in the hour of His agony; and yet no imprecation rises to the lips of him who poured out his soul in that Psalm. We are reminded of the noble words of Job towards the end of the great speech in which he vindicates his character and which touches the highest point of Old Testament morality:

> "I never rejoiced at an enemy's fall,
> Nor triumphed when any misfortune befel him:
> I never have suffered my mouth to sin
> By demanding his life in an imprecation" (xxxi. 29 f.).

But these lofty heights of self-control were scaled by few; and alike in their general circumstances and in their temper those distant days lie very close to the circumstances and the temper of to-day.

The Note of Joy

Now before going on to point out some of the lessons which the Psalter is fitted to teach us to-day,

it is worth our while, in the midst of all these grim realities, to remember how the Psalter begins and ends. It begins and ends upon a note of joy. It begins, "Happy is the man who goes on his way" with the law of God in his heart. The Psalter is full of sorrow and strife, of perplexity and problems, of sobs and sighs; yet here, at the very beginning, is the answer, in anticipation, to all those doubts and fears. The Psalm assures us that, even in such a world as this, there may be such a thing as a happy man. And again, through all the sorrows which crowd its pages the note of joy rings out—so much so indeed that the Hebrew title for the Psalter is The Book of Praises—but from the one hundred and forty-fifth Psalm the chorus of praise grows louder and louder till, in the end, the whole universe is called upon to offer its multitudinous song of praise to Jehovah. It was the joyous recognition of the fact that, despite all seeming, the purpose of God goes marching on; that the world is in Hands as strong as they are kind; that the King of the ages, who could maintain His throne at the flood, will sit securely there forever (xxix. 10). For His are the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end.

The Place of Small Nations

i. Now let us look at some of the thoughts that shine forth from the Psalter upon the darkness of to-day. First, it suggests very powerfully *the place of small peoples in the purpose of God and in the education of humanity*. What is the Psalter? It is a small collection of one hundred and fifty poems, most of them very brief, which came from the tiny land of a small people. We have no need to depreciate

the great empires of the ancient or the modern world: they have all their place in the purpose of God, they have all their contribution to make to history and to humanity. But it is a simple historical fact that it is to the smallest peoples that the debt of the world is deepest. It would hardly be too much to say that the world owes more to Greece and to Palestine—to Greece with her deathless poetry, art, and philosophy, and to Palestine with her religion—than to all the other countries of the world put together. They are still to-day the inspiration, as they are the source, of those things by which the world lives. One of the Psalmists claimed that Jehovah had chosen Zion and desired it for His habitation (cxxxii. 13), and the infinite debt of the world to the Psalter is the proof that the claim is a just one. It is from Zion that the river of song broke forth which has made glad the weary of all the ages.

Now who are these, we ask, and whence came they—these whose words have been the comfort and the inspiration of the centuries, these whose songs have cheered so many a night of weeping and helped men to wait with patience and with hope for the joy that was to come in the morning? It is the simple truth that "their voice has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Who are these, and whence came they? They came from one of the smallest of lands, from a land not more than 150 miles from north to south, and between 40 and 50 from east to west—a country about the size of Wales; or if we believe, as we may, that much, if not most, of the Psalter comes from post-exilic times, and therefore from Judah, then the soil from which it sprang was far more diminutive still—only a few square miles. It would

seem to be to the weak and the small things of this world that God has given His greatest work to do. Size is not the measure of a nation's greatness any more than of a poem's: it might even be said that in the Psalter the greatest poems are the shortest, such as the twenty-third, the one hundred and twenty-sixth, and, generally, the beautiful group which we know as the Pilgrim Psalms (cxx.–cxxxiv.). It is very striking and worth laying to heart to-day that the profoundest service to the world has been rendered by one of the smallest of all peoples.

Faith in the Moral Order

ii. The next feature of the Psalter which we may consider as well fitted to steady and strengthen us in the chaos of to-day is *its overwhelming faith in the moral order of the world.* This, of course, it shares with the Old Testament as a whole: the prophets and the historians believe with all their soul that history is no haphazard thing, that God has built His world upon moral foundations, that He has not left it to itself, but that He sits upon the throne as Lord of history. But in the Psalms this great faith in the indestructibility of the moral order and the invincibility of the divine purpose shines forth with peculiar splendour, and all the more winsomely from its frequent pictorial setting. There were men in the Psalmists' time, as in our own, who were afraid for the foundations. They saw with sorrow that "the wicked were bending their bow, to shoot in the dark at the upright," and they asked with trepidation, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the just man do?" But the Psalmist had his answer ready:

" The Lord in His holy temple,
The Lord in heaven is enthroned.
His eyes behold the world,
They narrowly scan all men.
The Lord scans righteous and wicked,
And the lover of wrong He hates.
On the wicked He rains coals of fire and brimstone,
And scorching wind is their portion allotted.
For the Lord is just, and justice He loves ;
So the upright shall see His face " (xi. 4-7).

The Psalmist has no doubt about that. He believes that the foundations of the world are well and deeply laid, and that there need be no fear of their ultimate destruction. Those men knew that " clouds and darkness are round about Him," but they knew as well that " justice and right are the base of His throne " (xcvii. 2). He might seem to stand afar off and to give no heed to the cries of the faithful who were losing and suffering all for His dear sake. These were times when their misery constrained them to cry :

" Why dost Thou hide Thy face,
Forgetting our stress and our misery ? " (xliv. 24).

But they always came back in the end to their faith in His justice, in His pity, in His care for the men and the nations that are crushed. They return to the certainty that in His time, if not in theirs, He will defeat the purpose of the arrogant and vindicate those whom they have wronged. As in the twelfth Psalm :

" ' The poor are despoiled, and the needy are sighing ;
So now I will rouse Me '—the Lord declareth—
' And set him in safety at whom they snort ' " (xii. 5).

The only God whom the Jew could worship was a God to whom moral distinctions were real, and in a world governed by such a God it simply could

not be that the ultimate victory would rest with the forces of evil; for this would mean that God was not Lord of the world which His own fingers had framed, that His will was not the supreme will in the universe. But

> "He hath done whatever He pleased,
> In the seas and in all the abysses" (cxxxv. 6).

—and not least in the abysses of history. The men or the nations who defy His moral will have the universe against them, and their doom is sealed and certain. This faith is strikingly put in the figure of the Cup of the Divine Wrath:

> "In the hand of the Lord is a cup—
> Wine foaming, mixed richly with spices.
> Out of this He poureth a draught,
> And all the wicked on earth
> Must drain it down to the dregs" (lxxv. 8).

The writers of the Psalter have noted with satisfaction the nemesis that runs through human affairs. It is a favourite thought of the Old Testament that the unrepentant sinner is not only doomed, but is hurled to the very doom which he had planned for his victims. Jacob had hoped to succeed by craft, and by a deeper craft he is foiled. With whatsoever measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again: and so in the Psalter:

> "The wicked have drawn the sword,
> To slay men who walk uprightly;
> But their sword shall pierce their own hearts,
> And their bows shall be broken in pieces" (xxxvii. 14).

Over and over again we find in the Psalter the statement of this great fact of human experience—a fact

which is confirmed by the history that is being made to-day; a fact, too, which, from the frequent statements of it in the Psalter, seems to have furnished to those ancient singers particularly welcome proof that the moral fortunes of the world were in safe and mighty hands:

> "They set a net for my feet,
> But in it was their own foot caught" (lvii. 6).
> "On his own head his mischief comes back,
> On his own crown his violence descends" (vii. 16).

The faith of ancient Israel was that God would deal with men and nations according to their works; that the nations which live in forgetfulness of God and the claims of humanity would lose their place and power, while "the righteous," as one Psalmist puts it, "would come to their rights" (xciv. 15). And the remarkable thing is that they persisted in believing this, though their own national fortunes were for the most part stern and sore.

So far, of course, as the individual was concerned, they saw, as they could not fail to see, that goodness was no guarantee of prosperity, that fidelity, in certain conditions of society, might lead to danger and hardship and death; and to the cause of true religion there was a real gain in this, as it threw the faithful back upon their God, until they learned to find their sweetest satisfaction in Him for this life, and also—in one or two Psalms—for that which is to come (xlix. 15, lxxiii. 24). But while this is true of the individual, the Jew of the Old Testament persisted in believing that, in the international world, the prizes would go in the long run to those who by their morality deserved them. In the great conflict waged between the Lord and His people on the one hand, and the forces of evil, represented by the

heathen, on the other, it must not and could not be, that the Lord would be defeated.

"The Lord frustrates the designs of the heathen;
What the nations have purposed, He bringeth to nought.
But the Lord's own design shall stand for ever,
And what *His* heart hath purposed, through all generations"
(xxxiii. 10 f.).

There were times when it was plain to the dullest eye that the Lord had triumphed gloriously—times when (at least in the fancy of the Hebrew poet) the very heathen had been constrained to say, as they looked upon the fortunes of Israel, "The Lord hath dealt greatly with them" (cxxvi. 2). But when this faith in the visible supremacy of moral forces was not able to support itself upon contemporary fact, it did not cease to be sure of itself, nor did it permit itself to be crushed: it simply reached out boldly into the future and found there the consummation and the triumph which it could not find here. Like the brave men they were, those old Hebrews kept their faith when their world was falling to pieces. They refused to be crushed by the miseries and the horrors and the tragedies of the present, and they persisted in creating their splendid pictures of the better days to come.

And this is what we essentially mean by what we call the eschatology of the Psalter, and indeed of the Bible generally. It is simply "the extension of the faith in a living God to the final outcome of history." It was their way of saying that God was not to be baffled, that what He had begun He would assuredly continue and complete. So, when looking round with sorrow upon the world as they knew it, with its manifold disappointments and with the seeming defeat of the hopes they had been taught to cherish: when He for whom they longed seemed

to stand afar off: they said to their own hearts and to one another, "He is coming," "He will come."

> "He cometh to judge the earth.
> He will judge the world with justice
> And the nations with faithfulness" (xcvi. 13).

And this judgment to which they look forward not only makes their own hearts glad; it is a thing to set the whole universe ringing with joy:

> "Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice,
> Let the sea and its fulness thunder.
> Let the field, and all that is in it, exult:
> Let the trees of the forest ring out their joy" (xcvi. 11 f.).
> "Let the streams clap their hands,
> Let the hills shout for gladness together
> Before the Lord—for He cometh" (xcviii. 7 f.).

They walk by faith, not by sight: and what they see with the clear eye of faith is a sight to cheer and exhilarate the most despondent; for it was nothing less than a world steady at last after all the tempest, a God whose purpose had triumphed, and a faithful people who could lift their song of praise, "Now we are glad because it is quiet, for He has brought us to our desired haven." No lyric expresses this mood of ultimate triumph more gloriously than the ninety-third Psalm:

> "Jehovah hath taken His seat on the throne,
> Clothed with majesty, girt with might.
> Now the world stands firm, to be shaken no more;
> Firm standeth Thy throne from all eternity.
> Thou art from everlasting.
>
> The floods, O Jehovah, have lifted,
> The floods have lifted their voice,
> The floods lift up their roar.
> But more grand than the great roaring waters,
> More grand than the breakers of ocean,
> Grand on the height stands Jehovah."

The Lessons of History

iii. The next point we shall consider is the great place given in the Psalter, and indeed throughout the Bible, to history, the story of the national past. God had no doubt spoken through His servants the prophets; but to those who had ears to hear He had spoken, just as really, and far more loudly, through the facts. Many of the longer Psalms are just a recapitulation, in song, of the nation's story, told not, of course, to stimulate national pride, but to warn, to instruct and inspire the people, to reveal to them the gracious purpose that ran through their history like a line of light—that purpose with which it had been their high privilege to co-operate, but to which in the past they and their fathers had so often proved recreant. Sometimes, as in the one hundred and fifth Psalm, the past is regarded as an inspiration; sometimes, as in the seventy-eighth or the one hundred and sixth, it is a warning: an inspiration, when one contemplates the goodness of God which at every point shines through—for at every point, as the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm reminds us, there are flashes of that mercy which endureth for ever; and a warning, on the other hand, if we contemplate the pitiful response, and too often the stubbornness and defiance with which men had met that goodness. The national past is thus fitted to kindle both hope and remorse. The heart of one singer fills with hope as he sings:

> "I think of the days of old,
> Call to mind the ancient years" (lxxvii. 5);

and the heart of another sinks as he thinks of the poor response to the divine love of which the nation's history had been so full:

"We, like our fathers, have sinned,
We have done perversely and wickedly,
All heedless of Thy wonders,
And unmindful of Thy great kindness" (cvi. 6 f.).

That God is love and that the nation provoked Him—in these two words is summed up the story of the past. Like Deuteronomy, the historical Psalms are a ringing and reiterated call to the nation to *remember*. But it is so easy to forget, and especially easy, in the exaltation of a great deliverance, to forget the obligation of gratitude and of a moral response to the God by whose hands it was wrought, and there is many a word in the Psalter which we would do well to lay to heart to-day.

"The waters covered their foes,
Not a man of them was left.
So then they believed in His words,
And began to sing His praise.
But soon they forgot His doings.
Full lusty they grew in the desert.
He gave them the thing they had asked for,
But sent wasting disease among them" (cvi. 11–15).

The study of the past is fitted to save the men of to-day not only from despair, but from stupidity. From despair: for the past—so teach alike the poets of the Old Testament, its historians, and its prophets—the past, despite its tangle, reveals the thread of a divine purpose which runs through national and international history. But the study of it ought also to save us from stupidity: for the shadow that falls across the national history is thrown by the obstinacy and the irresponsiveness of the nation to the divine voice, by its refusal to cleanse its life of the vices that degrade it; and it is for us not to repeat the folly of the past:

"O that to-day ye would hear His voice:
'Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah,
Or at Massah, that day in the desert,
When your fathers tempted and tried Me,
Notwithstanding the works they had seen'" (xcv. 7–9).

The Training of the Young

iv. Now if the past has this power to instruct, inspire, and restrain, it follows that the story of the nation ought to be familiar—the great struggles, the heroic sacrifice—and also the lives of the great and good men who won for us the freedom and the truth and all the precious things by which we live. In other words, the national story ought to be taught to the children—taught by those who not merely know the facts, but who understand the drift and the inner meaning of it all—till it lives in their minds and in their hearts. Here we have unquestionably much to learn from the ancient Jew. The historical Psalms thrill with the sense of the obligation of the fathers to the children to acquaint them with the story of the nation's past:

"O God, we have heard with our ears,
Our fathers have told us the story
Of the work that Thou wroughtest in their day,
Thy wonders in days of old" (xliv. 1).

That patriotism is most stable and most deeply rooted which knows something of the events, the forces, the personalities of the days long gone, which helped to create for us the national type and polity which to-day we prize. It is well worth our while, in these modern days, to note how the poets, like the legislators of the Old Testament, plead with the fathers to pass on to the children the glorious memories

of the ancient days which they, in turn, had received from their fathers :

> " What we have heard and known,
> And what our fathers have told us,
> We will not hide from their children.
> We will tell to the next generation
> The praises and might of the Lord,
> And the wonders that He hath done.
> He set up a testimony in Jacob,
> A law He appointed in Israel,
> Which He commanded our fathers
> To make known unto their children,
> That the next generation should know it,
> That the children yet to be born
> Should arise and tell their children ;
> That in God they might put their confidence,
> And not forget God's works " (lxxviii. 3–7)

—and so on. Similarly, in the forty-eighth Psalm, written perhaps to celebrate some great deliverance :

> " Walk about Zion, go round her :
> Count ye her towers,
> Set ye your mind on her ramparts,
> Consider her palaces ;
> That ye tell to the next generation
> That such is Jehovah our God " (xlviii. 12–14).

The story of the past, when told by those who know the thrill of it, helps to open the meaning of the present ; for the God who worked then is working still—" as we have heard, so have we seen " (xlviii. 8)—and He will continue to work for ever, because He is a living God. It is this that links the ages each to each—*He* rather who links them ; and one of the great lessons of the Psalter will remain unlearned, until the home, the school, and the Church, realize their obligation to write upon the hearts of the children the story of the national past so plainly

that it will be a warning against sin and a stimulus to heroism and faith.

A Nation's Real Life

v. We are now led to consider the elements that constitute the real life and prosperity of a nation. There are songs in the Psalter, as there are large tracts of the Old Testament, which move within the region of the material, and which measure national prosperity by an external standard; as in the prayer:

> "May our garners be bursting
> With produce of all kinds.
> In the fields may our sheep bear
> By thousands and ten thousands" (cxliv. 13).

But though this is good, it is not the best. The real worth and prosperity of a land can best be measured by the kind of men it breeds; and the exquisite words of the eighty-fifth Psalm, written in a time of deep national gloom, set forth with singular beauty the ideal of a land in which the citizens are all kind and loyal to one another, and angels look down upon the lovely sight from the windows of heaven with eyes of wonder and delight: a land where

> "Kindness and loyalty meet,
> Peace and righteousness kiss.
> Loyalty springs from the earth,
> Righteousness looks from the sky.
> Yea, the Lord shall give all that is good,
> Our land yielding her increase,
> Righteousness marching before Him,
> And peace on the track of His steps" (lxxxv. 10–13).

The only prosperity for which a true patriotism cares is the prosperity which goes hand in hand with a

fair civic life. It will not despise rich crops and large flocks, it will rejoice when the land yields her increase; but before and above that, it will value growth of character; crops of "kindness and loyalty" must also spring from the land. Then, and not till then, "shall glory dwell in our land" (lxxxv. 9), when the citizens are just and gracious to one another, and when the moral life of the community is inspired and transfigured by religion: in the noble imagination of the psalm, when the kindness and loyalty that spring up from the earth are watched by the eyes of the angel of peace that looks down from the heavens. The patriotism which needeth not to be ashamed is that which yearns, not so much for crops and commerce and gold, as for kindness and justice, for salvation and God.

There was the more need to emphasize the necessity for these things, as there is proof enough throughout the Psalter that the national life of Israel was menaced and disturbed as much by foes within as by foes without. The unity of spirit which ought to characterize a community of brethren who live within the same borders, and whose glory it should be to help the nation to contribute its quota to the common good of the world—this unity was ruined by the spirit of selfishness and by the antagonism of class to class. The background of the Psalter is one of civic strife and contention; for behind the figures of the Psalmists, with the light of faith upon their sorrowful faces, there are gathered together the cruel and the selfish, the immoral and the unbelieving, swaggerers and traitors and liars—a motley crowd of knaves and fools, who care for nothing but themselves, who scoff at the obligation to contribute to the higher life of the community, who recognize no interest but their own, who "boast of the multitude

of their riches," and who use the power which circumstances have given them to exploit the weaker members of the society to which they all belong. The Psalter sorrowfully recognizes the existence of two classes within the nation—not the employers and the employed, not the capitalists and the working men, but those who believe in moral distinctions and those who do not. It is true of the Psalter, as of the Old Testament generally, that the good were often the poor, and the wealthy the wicked: but the distinction is really far more than an economic one. It is a distinction between those who care deeply and those who care nothing for the things that matter to the well-being of a nation; between those who are prepared to sacrifice life itself in defence of the things for which Israel stood, and those to whom ease and pleasure and power and money are the only things that matter. It happens that the Hebrew words for "the nations" or "the heathen" and "the proud" or "arrogant" are written and sound very much alike; and there is good reason to believe that the text of Psalms which were originally written to lament the assaults of the proud upon the better life of Israel was sometimes modified in later days so as to apply to the heathen who sought to blot out the nation. There is surely something very suggestive in this: it carries the implication that a nation may suffer as much and be exposed to dangers as great from the selfishness of its own citizens as from the aggression and the cruelty of the foreigners who hate it. The Psalmists felt that the most deadly enemy might sometimes be within the gates. They knew that a purifying judgment within the nation itself was as sorely needed as deliverance from external foes, and for such a judgment they had the courage to pray. The war is not won when the foreigner

is repelled; a war no less terrible has still to be waged for the purification and the uplifting of the national life.

The Home

vi. Now in this fight for the betterment of the nation's life, the Psalter recognizes that two institutions are of supreme worth—the Home and the Church. There are few pictures in the Psalter more winsome than that in Psalm cxxviii. of the labouring man, with his wife, the glad mother of the many children who are gathered about the table, and all this gracious family life is rooted in the fear of the Lord:

> "Happy all that fear the Lord,
> Even they that walk in His ways.
> Thou shalt eat what thy hands have toiled for.
> Happy and prosperous thou!
> Like a fruitful vine shall thy wife be
> In the innermost room of thy house:
> Thy children, like slips of olive,
> Round about thy table.
> See! this is the blessing
> Of the man that feareth the Lord" (cxxviii. 1–4).

And in the preceding Psalm there is a hint that the glory, the strength, and the safety of a land lies in the number of the children in her homes.

> "See! sons are a gift of the Lord,
> The fruit of the womb a reward.
> Like arrows, by warriors wielded,
> Even so are the sons of youth.
> Happy the man who has filled
> His quiver full of them.
> He shall not be ashamed when he speaks
> With enemies in the gate" (cxxvii. 3–5).

It is obvious that the dearly bought gains of the past can only be handed on to the future by the children of to-day; and, other things being equal, the greater the population, the more certainly and securely will the life of the nation, and the type which it has developed, be carried forward to enrich the larger life of the world in the days to come. A year before war broke out, Pastor Dörries of Hanover, preaching from the lines last quoted, bitterly lamented the rapid decline in the number of births in the Protestant parts of Germany, and pointed out that if the present ratio of the birth-rate in Protestant and Roman Catholic families were to be continued, in a few years Germany would cease to be a predominantly Protestant country, and the great work of Luther would be, to that extent, undone.[1] When the enemies come to speak in our gates—in other words, when the distinctive life of the nation is being menaced—the future may be faced without fear when the defenders of the national traditions are not only brave but many. It has been said that, had the population of France been as great as that of Germany, there might have been no war: the enemies might never have gone near the gates had they known that they would meet there a host as great as their own, both willing and able to speak a sufficiently loud and meaningful word.

But, as we have seen, the real strength and glory of the family is that in it is furnished the first opportunity to leave upon the mind and heart of the child a lasting impression of the place and the power and the meaning of religion. There his mind can and should receive a bias in favour of the things that matter to the lives of nations and of men. We have already seen how scrupulous the Hebrew father

[1] *Evangelische Freiheit*, Nov. 1913, pp. 416–424.

was to tell the story of the national past to his children (cf. Josh. iv. 6 f., 21 f.), that they might learn to appreciate the mission of the nation—the things for which she stood, and the Power by which she stood. The Hebrew, who knew how to put first things first, was unquestionably right in viewing the home as primarily a school of religion and of faith. Neither Kultur, whatever that may be, nor culture, whatever that may be, will furnish a child so completely for the service of his fellows as the fear of God, the sense of His supremacy over individual and national life, and of the responsibility of men to Him.

The Church

vii. The other great factor in the maintenance of the national life upon a worthy level is the Church. There the religious discipline which is begun in the home is continued and confirmed. Surely the pure joy of worship has never been expressed with such simplicity and power as in those sweet Psalms which voice the yearning for the courts of the Lord (lxxxiv. 2) and which tell of the delight of the pilgrims:

> "I was glad when they said unto me,
> 'We will go to the house of the Lord'" (cxxii. 1).

They were glad because of the memories that crowded upon them of the tribes that throughout the centuries had made their pilgrimage thither; glad because there they met with their brethren and companions from afar; glad because, after the long and weary way through many a valley of tears, they were rewarded at the last with the vision of God in Zion. But there were deeper reasons for their joy than those. For to such men worship was not merely

a gorgeous ceremony fitted to titillate the senses and to recall memories of the ancient days, but it was also a stimulus to the moral life. Some of those who took part in that worship had to spend their lives among what the writer of the eighty-fourth Psalm calls "the tents of wickedness" (*v.* 10)—a reference, no doubt, to the foreign lands where so many Jews had their home, lands where degrading religions were practised and too often a degrading morality prevailed. But the worship in Jerusalem, and still more, no doubt, in the synagogues, would recall the sterner demands and temper of the religion of the fathers. There the moral nature would be braced again, and they would return to the struggle in the tents of wickedness with fresh hope and courage. And so it is to-day. The world would be a very different world if the Church, with her high and holy claims, held the place which she deserves in the affections and in the life of men and nations.

> "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
> They shall prosper that love thee" (cxxii. 6).

The peace and prosperity of humanity would be guaranteed if all cared deeply for Jerusalem and for the gracious memories that gather round our hearts when we name the name of Zion.

The Brotherhood of Men

viii. But this leads us to remember in conclusion that to the noblest of the Psalmists, as to the greatest of the Prophets, the ideal is a brotherhood of nations, bound together in the bonds of a common salvation to Him who is the God and Father of them all. They call us to the contemplation of a Kingdom which

covers all the world and stretches down the length of all the centuries (cxlv.). Though in the roar of the cannons we hear it to-day but very faintly, the call is to "all people that on earth do dwell" to "sing to the Lord with cheerful voice."

"Bless us, O God, with Thy favour,
Let the light of Thy face fall upon us;
That the world may know Thy way,
And all nations Thy power to save.
Let the peoples praise Thee, O God,
Let the peoples—all of them—praise Thee" (lxvii. 1–3).

We live in the faith that this fair dream may some day—and we pray God soon—be translated into fact. This dream has found no expression so winsome or so brilliant as in that too little known Psalm, the eighty-seventh, which, but for the names of the strange peoples that crowd it, would be one of the most familiar, as it is surely one of the noblest, songs in all the world. It sets before us Jehovah writing in the book of life the names of the citizens of Zion, and among them are numbered men from Egypt and Babylon, from Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia—men from cruel and distant lands who in ancient or more modern days had been the troublers of Israel. Here comes a dark-faced man from Ethiopia: down goes his name in the book of the citizens of Zion. And here is a man from Philistia, which in the old days of Samson and Samuel had harassed Israel so sorely; and here is another from Phœnicia, whose princess had once sat as queen upon the throne of Israel and used her power to slay the prophets of Jehovah with the sword; and here is another from Egypt, the memory of whose oppression persisted in Israel for a thousand years; and another from Babylon, whom an earlier Psalmist had cursed as

the great Despoiler. Now their names lie together on the registry of Zion, written by the finger of Jehovah Himself, and Zion is acknowledged as the Mother of them all. The streets of the city of Zion are exceeding broad: on them there is room for the reconciliation of ancient enmities. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God."

Here is a vision of the happy time when the nations shall no more dash themselves and one another in pieces; but, worshipping their common God as children of Mother Zion, "thus"—in the words of the Psalm—

> "Thus shall they sing, as they dance,
> Saying, 'All my springs are in Thee.'"

What better can we do in the present distress than, as we believe in God Himself, so also believe in the certainty of this brilliant and blessed future, and comfort our hearts with these "glorious things"?

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL

INDEX OF SUBJECT MATTER

ABEL, 220 ff.
Abiathar, 80
Æschylus, 42, 45
Agamemnon, 42
Agriculture, 218
American Revision, 4, 8 f., 12
Amos, 146 f., 215, 222, 262 ff.
Animals, attitude to, 18 f.
Anointed, Jehovah's, 83
Anthology, Greek, 37, 48 ff.
Anthropomorphism, 157 f.
Anthropopathy, 42 f.
Antigone, 41, 45 f.
Antiochus Epiphanes, 173
Arbitration, 250
Aristotle, 31, 37 ff., 44 f.
Arndt, 170
Augustine, mother of, 127

BAAL worship, 218, 221
Babel, 223 f.
Badè, Professor, 246
Ban, the, 81
Barton, Professor, 78
Bible, as autobiographical, 141
Brotherhood of man, 298 ff.

CAIN, 220 ff.
Canon of Old Testament, 120
Cheyne, T. K., 13, 241
Chronicler, 55, 71, 76, 95, 99, 102 f.
Church, 117, 267, 297
City and tent, 224, 268
Civilization, 212–225, 268
Commandment, second, 32
Communion with God, 140–211
Conduct as affected by religion, 122, 153, 165 f., 207 f., 298
Confession, 165
Confessions of Augustine, 127
Conflict of cultures, 121 f., 275
Courage, intellectual, 253–258

DANIEL, 115 f., 162
David, 56, 64, 69 ff.
Davidson, A. B., 2, 154
Days before Yesterday, 10
Democratic spirit of Old Testament, 261
Demosthenes, 32
Denney, J., 199
Deutero-Isaiah, 108
Disarmament, 250
Divorce, 23, 108 f.
Dörries, 296
Drunkenness, 241

ECCLESIASTES, 100, 107, 216 f.
Ecclesiasticism, 94 ff., 117
Ecstasy, prophetic, 144 f.
Elijah, 4, 25, 166
Elmslie, W. A. L., 121
Emendation of text, 5 ff.
Encyclopædia Biblica, 78
Endor, witch of, 125
Eskimo, 10
Esther, 22, 113
Ethics, Nic. 37 ff.
Exile, effect of, 92 f.
Ezekiel, 94, 108, 132, 267
Ezra, 19, 108, 113

Father and Son, 88
Foreigner, attitude to, 19, 108–110, 299
Forgiveness, 180
Form, literary, 23, 30
Fulfilment of Scripture in Christ, 17
Future life, 105–107, 124–139

GALATIANS, 21
Genesis, 24, 212–225
Gibeon, 77
Gideon's fleece, 215
God, 175 ff.
Good and evil, 219
Gosse, E., 88
Greek Anthology, 37, 48 ff.

Greek Version, 5, 33
Gressmann, 90

Hamilton, Lord Frederic, 10
Hebraism, 29 ff.
Hellenism, 29 ff., 121 f.
Herodotus, 33 f., 43, 48
Historians as preachers, 70, 212–225
Historical approach, 69
Historical books, 155–169, 212–214, 230 f.
Historical setting, 22
History, God in, 178, 291
History, lessons of, 288–292
History of European Morals, 88
History of the Hebrews, 55
Home, the, 295 f.
Homer, 34, 37, 47
Homiletic approach, 69
Hosea, 147, 264 f.
Hymns of hate, 278

Idealization of past, 76
Ideal man, 40 f.
Impartiality, Greek, 34
Imprecatory psalms, 277 f.
Individualism, 75, 104, 128 f., 132
Intercession, 164, 193
Interpretation of Scripture, 16 ff.
Isaac, offering of, 26
Isaiah, 149 f., 236–251

Jashar, Book of, 24
Jealousy, divine, 43, 219
Jehovah, 3 f.
Jephthah's daughter, 26
Jeremiah, 151 f., 154, 265 f.
Jesus, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 185–197
Jewish Revision, 12
Job, 105–107, 231 f., 252–258
Jonah, 110, 212 f.
Joseph, 158 f., 162
Joy, note of, 279 f.
Judaism, spirit of, 92 ff.
Justice, 135 ff., 263

Kipling, 90 f.
Kittel, 55

Lecky, 88
Liberty, 28, 252–258
Literalism, 24 f.
Literary criticism, 14
Literary form, 23, 30

Macdonald, Professor, 217, 220
Magnanimity of David, 83 f.
Malachi, 98, 267
Marcellinus, 35
Menander, 37
Mephibosheth, 74, 84
Messianic argument, 1
Messianic hope, 137
Miracle, 215
Modern Criticism, 124, 223
Monarchy, attitude to, 51
Moral interpretation, 87 ff.
Morality, 122, 165, 207 f., 298
Moral order, 98 ff., 135 f., 282 ff.
Moses' prayer, 36, 164
Mother-love, 89
Myers, A. J. W., 26

National welfare, 292 f.
Nature, God in, 178 f., 214 f.
Naumann, 178
Nehemiah, 108 f., 166–169
Nicias, 41
Nob, priests of, 66, 78
Nomadism, 222

Œdipus, 41, 45 f., 48
Old Mortality, 173
Old Testament as protest, 114 f., 119–123
Old Testament democratic, 261
Old Testament in Light of To-day, 246
Old Testament in Sunday School, 26
Oracle, 77
Oratio recta, 8
Oresteia, 45

Paraphrase, 10
Pathological features of prophecy, 144–146
Pathos of life, 47, 50
Patriotism, 290
Paul, 19, 21, 36, 38, 144, 200–202, 208 ff.
Peabody, Professor, 27
Peace, 250 f.
Personality, 176, 266 f.
Pessimism, 226–235
Petition, 163, 193
Pindar, 43
Plato, 32, 37 ff., 43, 46 f.
Poetical form, 12 f., 24
Poetics, 31, 44 f.

Polycrates, 43
Post-exilic age, 94–123
Prayer, 161–169; Lord's prayer, 190, 194 ff,; prayers of Jesus, 191–194; prayers of prophets, 153; prayer to Christ, 200, 204
Presence of God, 158
Priest, 94 ff.
Prophet, 94 f., 118, 130 f., 142–154, 233; prophet and social questions, 259–269; prophet as pessimist, 226–235; prophetic ideas, 214–216
Prosperity, 160 f.
Proverbs, Book of, 121
Providence, 158 f.
Psalter, 170–183, 229 f., 270–300

Rechabites, 222
Religion of Israel, 78
Renan, 65
Resurrection, 133; of Jesus, 202
Retributive justice, 231, 252 f., 285
Revised Version, 1 ff.
Rhythm, 12 f.
Rufinus, 48
Ruth, 19, 109
Ryle, H. E., 120

Sabatier, 229
Sadness, 47 ff.
Samson, 22
Samuel, 62 f.
Saul, 51 ff.
Scepticism, 97 ff., 233
Scott, Sir Walter, 173
Scripture, 118 ff., 179
Sheol, 127 f.
Shimei, 82, 85
Sin, 179, 239 f.
Small nations, place of, 280 ff.
Smith, Sir George Adam, 124, 223
Social principles of prophets, 259–269
Sociological Study of Bible, 27
Solomon, 77
Song of Songs, 17
Son of ——, 9 f.
Sophocles, 41, 45 f.
Speaker in the Psalms, 171 f.
Strife, civic, 293
Studia Semitica, 217, 220
Studies in Life, 121
Suffering, 44
Sunday school, 26
Suppression of narrative, 73
Symposium, 37
Syrian Threshing-board, 18

Temple, 97, 179, 276
Tent and city, 224
Terence, 33
Thanksgiving, 164, 192 f.
Themistocles, 36
Theophanies, 155
Thucydides, 34 f.
Tree of knowledge, 219; tree of life, 219

Uniqueness of Jesus, 186–190, 198 ff.
Unit, the religious, 75, 89, 104, 132
Unity of race, 215

Variety of opinion, 18 ff.
Variety of outlook, 102–110
Vengeance, 22, 25, 33, 223, 230, 278
Vindictiveness, 109, 275 f.

Wallis, Louis, 27
War, 236–251, 273–279
Warfare, spiritual, 113
Wedgwood, J., 34, 112
Wetzstein, 18
Wise men, 120–122
Woman, 217,
Work and prayer, 167
Worship, public, 159 f., 179, 297 f.

Xenophanes, 43
Xerxes, 43

Young, training of, 290 ff.

Ziba, 85

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

INDEX OF CHIEF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

	PAGE
GENESIS	
i. 16	115
iii. 18 f.	216, 218
iii. 22	219 f.
iv. 2–4	220 f.
iv. 23 f.	223
v. 24	136
viii. 22	215
xi.	223 f.
xxiv.	158, 163
xxxii. 10	164
xxxvii. 33, 35	127
xxxix. 9	162
xl. 7	87
xlv. 5, 7, 8	159
l. 20	159
EXODUS	
xii. 49	20
xxxii. 32	164
xxxiii. 11	157
LEVITICUS	
xvii. 13	126
xix. 9–18	165
xix. 15	261
xix. 31	125
NUMBERS	
vi. 24–26	166
xxiii. 9	112
DEUTERONOMY	
viii.	160 f.
xiv. 1	126, 130
xiv. 21	19
xvi. 20	33
xviii. 11	125
xxi. 22 f.	90
xxiii. 19	20
xxiv. 16	75
xxv. 4	18
JOSHUA	
x. 12–14	24
JUDGES	
vi. 36–40	215
1 SAMUEL	
xiv. 18	57
xxiv. 6, 10	83
xxvi. 9, 11	84
xxviii.	125
2 SAMUEL	
i.	83
ix. 13	84
xvi. 5–7	82
xxi. 1–14	72 ff.
1 KINGS	
ii.	81
xviii. 39	4
xviii. 46	145
2 KINGS	
iii. 15	145
iv. 23	160
xiii. 21	138
xix. 14 ff.	161
EZRA	
iv. 1–3	116
vii. 14	119
NEHEMIAH	
ii.	166–168
v. 14 f.	165
xiii. 24	114
xiii. 25	109, 114
ESTHER	
viii. 17	112
ix. 1 f.	112
ix. 5, 16	109
ix. 10 f.	75

JOB

	PAGE
iii. 18 f.	129
ix. 22–24	99
x. 21 f.	128
xiii. 15	7
xiv. 7–12	105 f., 134, 231 f.
xiv. 13–15	133
xix. 25 ff.	106, 134 f.
xxi. 23–26	100
xxxi. 29 f.	279

PSALMS

xi.	176, 282 f.
xv. 1	41
xvi.	136 f., 171 f.
xvii.	136
xxxiv. 10	5
xliv. 1	70, 178, 290
xlviii. 12–14	291
xlix. 7	6
xlix. 11	5
lviii. 10	16
lxvii. 1–3	299
lxxiii.	136, 182
lxxiii. 23 f.	150, 235
lxxiv. 4–8	276 f.
lxxiv. 9	118
lxxv. 8	284
lxxvi. 10	7
lxxviii. 3–7	291
lxxxiii.	277 f.
lxxxv. 10–13	292 f.
lxxxvii.	299 f.
xc.	174
xci.	176
xciii.	287
xcv. 7–9	290
cvi.	289
cxxiii.	181
cxxvii. 2	181
cxxvii. 3–5	295
cxxviii. 1–4	295
cxxxi.	181
cxxxvii.	274
cxxxix. 8	131
cxliv. 13	292
cxliv.	299

PROVERBS

xxx. 1–4	101
xxx. 8 f.	261

ECCLESIASTES

i. 5	217
iii. 19–21	107, 232
vii. 26, 28	217
viii. 14, ix. 2	101
ix. 5, 10	107, 129

ISAIAH

i. 26	224
ii. 1–4	250
v. 1 f.	13
v. 26	13
vi.	149 f.
vii. 11	216
viii. 11	145, 149
viii. 13	154
viii. 19	125
xi. 4	6
xiv.	127-129
xx.	146
xxvi. 14	137
xxvi. 19	106, 137
xxviii. 23–29	218
xlv. 22	108

JEREMIAH

i. 4–10	149
iv. 19	8
vi. 14, viii. 11	9
xii. 1 f.	233
xvii. 9	260, 266
xxvii.	146
xxviii.	152
xxxi. 29	97
xxxi. 33 f.	104, 266
xxxii. 6–8	152
xxxv. 7–10	222

EZEKIEL

i.	148
viii. 3	145
xi. 24	145
xii. 1 ff.	146
xviii. 2	97
xviii. 4	75, 104
xxxii. 18–32	128
xlviii. 35	224

DANIEL

iii. 25	10
vi. 24	75
vii. 13	10
xii. 2	106

HOSEA

i. 2	147
vi. 5	5
vi. 6	97

Amos	page
i. f.	215
iii. 1–8	146
iii. 7	151
v. 24 f.	96, 263
vii. 14	9, 144
viii. 5	11
ix. 2	131

Jonah	
iv. 5	109
iv. 11	18

Micah	
vi. 6–8	268

Habakkuk	
i. 2, 13	233
iii. 17 f.	151, 261

Zephaniah	
i. 12	219, 231

Haggai	
i. 9 ff.	111

Zechariah	
viii. 10	112

Malachi	
i.–iii.	97-99
ii. 11	114
ii. 17	23
iii. 8–10	97
iii. 14–16, iv. 2	235

1 Maccabees	
i. 56 f.	120
iv. 46, ix. 27, xiv. 41	118

Tobit	
iv. 17	132

Matthew	
x. 32, 37	189
xi. 27	188
xiv. 23	197
xvi. 14	118

Mark	
ix. 47	25
xiii. 11	31, 168

Luke	page
iii. 21 f.	191
vi. 12	197
ix. 18	191
xi. 2–4	190
xiii. 1–5	88
xiv. 26	189

John	
ix. 2	75, 88

Acts	
vii. 59	204
xviii. 9	201
xxvii. 23 f.	201

Romans	
vii. 24	38
ix. 3	164

1 Corinthians	
vii. 18–24	207
ix. 9	19
xiv. 18	144
xiv. 19	146
xv. 58	208

2 Corinthians	
i.	201 f., 210
xii. 4	144
xii. 8	200

Galatians	
iii. 23, 25	199
v. 1	21
v. 25	207

Ephesians	
i. 20 f.	203
v. 14	30

Philippians	
ii. 9	203
iv. 6	209

Colossians	
i. 15–18	203

2 Thessalonians	
iii. 15, 16	209

1 Timothy	page
ii. 5	203

Hebrews	
i. 1	23
i. 3, iv. 14, v. 9 . .	203
xi. 4	221
xi. 9 f.	224
xii. 24	203

James	
iv. 4	207
iv. 14 . . .	49, 234

1 Peter	page
i. 21	199

1 John	
i. 1–3, 7, ii. 3–5. .	205 f.
ii. 15	207

Revelation	
xxi. 2, 14 . . .	224
xxii. 20	204

EVANGELICAL

DATE DUE

BS
1140
.M28

51,499

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

United Theological Seminary Library
MAIN BS1140.M28
McFadyen, Joh The interest of the Bible
3 0645 0002 0813 8